

The STA Times

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2021**



ST. THOMAS AQUINAS SECONDARY SCHOOL

thestatimes@aquinas.org / www.aquinas.org / grossling@aquinas.org

New Year, New Council

By Adelina Popa

With the new school year in full bloom, this year's new student council is hard at work to offer STA the best year yet. Only a month and a half in, and the council has already paved the way to a very promising rest of the year. Many events such as the Grade 8 Connect, International Student Welcoming BBQ, and the Walkathon carnival set this new beginning ablaze and in hopes of more terrific occasions. Before diving any deeper into the plans and doings of the council, it would be important to know who the people pulling the strings are. As your presidents, you have none other than Dylan Dick and Brandon Cruz. Alongside them are Alex and Lucas McLennan as vice-presidents, myself and Daniela Purvica as your secretaries, Ayden Eng and Ayden Lum as your Finance team, Channa Dalisay and Elizabeth Kasabashian as your International Reps, Juliana Sestini and Isabel Altamirano for Sports Reps, and lastly, Daniel Dai and Jordan Zadeiks as your Communications duo. You may believe that this article is biased considering that I, too, am part of the student council. I can assure you that that is not the case, except maybe for a sprinkle. I can confidently say that this wonderful group of people is incredibly hard-working and willing to make this year one for the books. While the initiative and drive are there, not everything runs as smooth as butter all the time. As a collective, we attempt to bring new ideas to the table. This turns out to be more difficult than it appears to be, as conceptualizing something that will be perceived well by the whole student body is quite challenging. Not to fear though, we are up for the challenge and are prepared to do all it takes to generate fresh new ideas for all of you to indulge in. As things to look forward to in the future, I can't exactly let you in on all of our secrets, but new things are coming your way soon STA! When it comes to the values of the student council, one of the core values that we cherish most is our connection to the rest of the students. To promote the connection between us and everyone else, we adopted last year's daily news announcements but tweaked it to fit our purpose. We decided to switch our hosts every week to familiarize everyone with all the members. We believe that it is important to build a relationship between the council and the rest of the students. This ensures that when it comes to event planning, you are capable of communicating your feedback to us. All that the council wants is for you, yes you, to enjoy this year as much as possible. So don't hesitate to reach out to us and tell us what you want to see throughout the year in STA.

The Story of STA Connect 2021

By Daniela Purvica

Grade 8 Connect, an event brought back to welcome the newest students of STA to our school. It seems like only a short while ago, I was in the same position as this year's incoming class. Slightly nervous and unsure of what to expect I remember walking into the old school gym, seeing brand new faces that would become some of my closest friends throughout my high school experience. This is a feeling that I know many of this year's Grade 12s can also relate to. With this core memory of grade 8 in mind, the student council team was determined to make it an event to unite the newest class of STA.

CONT'D

The event kicked off on the first Friday immediately after school. Our own music DJ, Daniel Dai, greeted students as they poured into the gym. The activities started off with small groups led by the student council team and grade 12 volunteers. After everyone began to feel acquainted with the help of knowing one another's favourite colours and ice cream flavours, the first major activity began. The small group's artistic abilities were put to the test as they competed against each other trying to get through all the prompts. The challenge was not made any easier though, as a gym-wide game of tag was added into the mix.



Winning the game of moving Pictionary was essential to attaining the magical ticket of being first to enjoy the final part of the Connect event, the beloved barbeque. But before the food festivities could kick off, one final game to determine the Connect champions was on the horizon. Each grade 8 student individually had to come face to face in an ultimate game of rock, paper, scissors. Once a student lost, they would go behind the line of the student that won, and followed them. As the following version of the classic game came to a close, a conga line of grade 8 students could be seen serpentineing throughout the gym. In the end, Eva Sikich and Maia Wein's small group won the fast pass to the array of food that awaited them in the school cafeteria.

As the party moved to the cafeteria to feast on the famous Campbell burgers and hot dogs the event slowly came to a close. It was a surreal feeling to see the grade 8 class together in the cafeteria hopefully starting a tradition of initiation into STA. Ultimately, it was a fun-filled afternoon of bonding and getting to know one another, and a nice kick off to the journey for the class of 2026.

HALLOWEEN Q&A

What is Halloween?

Halloween is a holiday celebrated each year on October 31

How did Halloween start?

The tradition originated with the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, when people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts.

What are Halloween's origins?

Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain. The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago, mostly in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1. This day marked the end of the summer and the harvest and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year that was often associated with human death. Celts believed that on the night before the new year (November 1), the boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead became blurred. On the night of October 31, they celebrated Samhain, where it was believed that ghosts of the dead returned to earth.

Where did the word "Halloween" come from?

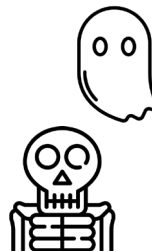
The word "halloween" comes from the Catholic church and is corrupted from "All Hallows Eve". "All Hollows Day" (also known as "All Saints Day") is a Catholic day to honour saints on the day of November 1.

How did trick-or-treating become what it is today?

Trick-or-treating is thought to have Irish origins, possibly from a practice going door to door to collect money and cake. Failure to carry a sweet treat would end in a practical joke.



Witches - During the Middle Ages, the people that celebrated Samhain were often accused of being witches. Witch hunters believed that on Halloween, the barrier between worlds would thin, and the magical energy increased, making witches very powerful.



Ghosts and skeletons - During Samhain, it was believed that the veil between the living and dead thinned, allowing spirits to cross over to our realm. Practitioners left food offerings outside for wandering spirits and prepared plates at their dinner table for deceased loved ones.



Bats - During the ceremonies, bonfires lit up the night sky to aid spirits in the afterlife and honor their passing. These large fires attracted hoards of flying insects, the prey of many bat species.



Jack-o-lanterns - The first Jack-O-Lanterns out of turnips, not pumpkins, to frighten evil spirits from their homes on Samhain. Once the Irish brought their traditions to North America, people began to use the more common and easier to carve pumpkins in place of turnips.

Scariest Urban Legends from around the World

By Daniela Purvica

Picture this. It's a horribly rainy afternoon in Vancouver and you've just come back from an extremely exhausting week. 3 days of volleyball with no time to do homework, 4 tests on Monday, and a huge project that is past its due date.

Great. What are you supposed to do now? Incessantly search Google for scary stories of course! But it's been 4 hours, 3 Reddit rabbit holes and 40 Wikipedia articles later and all the scary stories you've read or heard about are not original at all.

Paranormal sightings and hauntings? So cliché. Serial killers and murders? Already heard. But turns out, the lack of scary stories isn't in what you're looking for, it's where you're looking. Expanding horizons, and looking towards the traditions and perspectives of other countries and groups of people in the world, especially with scary stories. So forget about the overdone, westernized versions of Halloween and scary stories that we've been hearing about forever, and let's take a trip around the globe for the scariest urban legends in different countries, ranked from "Not that bad" to "Oh my, I am never speaking to another person carrying scissors again."

1. The Ijiraq (The Inuit, Canada)

Let's go to Canada, only further North, towards the Northwest or Yukon Territories. Let's meet up with the Inuit, a group of local Indigenous peoples that have inhabited the area for thousands of years! They've been so hospitable, they even gave us a place to stay for the night! There's so much to explore! It's cold up here. Wait a minute, they don't want us to explore? Oh, I see. Apparently, if you go out into the land at night, you may encounter an Ijiraq, a shapeshifter who will steal you away in the night and abandon you deep in the arctic where you will not be able to find your way home. They take many forms, most popularly caribou, and are impossible to distinguish, except for one feature. Their glowing, blood red eyes. If an Ijiraq shapeshifts into a human, they become distorted, with their eyes and mouths lying horizontally on their faces.

I swear we won't get caught by one. Come on now, let's explore the Arctic woods! Oh don't worry, if we do happen to get caught by an Ijiraq, Inuit Elders have placed Inukshuks, stone landmarks along the path of the forest for those who do get stolen, so that they can escape and find their way back home. Come on, don't be afraid! The Ijiraq steal the memories of those who encounter them, so even if we did see one and get scared out of our minds, it's not like we would remember...

CONT'D

2. La Llorona (Mexico)

Let's change up the climate and head somewhere warmer. How about Mexico? Amazing climate, culture, and food! Unfortunately, it looks like we should avoid bodies of water, because a woman called "La Llorona" haunts the area, crying and kidnapping any children she finds. According to the locals, long ago a woman named Maria fell in love with a wealthy man and married him, eventually having two children. Unfortunately, her husband started getting distant, ignoring her and rarely giving attention to his kids. One day, she caught him with another woman, and out of rage, drowned her children. She immediately regretted it, weeping for her children and drowning herself shortly after. She was banished from heaven to haunt the earth until she found her lost children, becoming known as "La Llorona," which translates into "the weeping woman." Now, she roams the land, searching for her children, crying and dragging away any kids she finds by themselves, occasionally going after a cheating husband. Will you stop worrying? Even with our masks on, we don't look like children or cheating husbands. Still, if you hear anyone crying "mi hijos" (my children) in the night, running certainly isn't a bad idea...

3. Kuchisake-Onna (Japan)

Japan is our last stop. It is gorgeous no matter where you go, but beyond the sightseeing, stunning architecture, and food, there's a danger to look out for. That danger is Kuchisake-Onna, or "The slit mouth woman". Legend says that Kuchisake-Onna was a beautiful woman who was abused by her husband, who grabbed a pair of scissors and slit a smile down from her ears and across her mouth. Kuchisake-Onna walks around cities wearing a surgical mask and carrying a pair of scissors, approaching random strangers and asking them if she is pretty. If they respond with no, she'll kill them with the scissors, if they respond yes, she'll remove her mask and ask if they still think she's pretty. If the stranger responds with a no, she'll murder them with the scissors, but if they respond with yes, she'll cut them identically to herself. Come to think of it, that's probably the scariest story we've heard so far, especially since everyone wears masks, so literally anyone could be Kuchisake-Onna. I suppose that's a risk we'll have to take!

I have an idea, since we won't be seeing each other for a while, do you want to take off our masks and see how the other person looks? Awesome, let's do it on the count of three. One, two.. Wait, one question before we take them off. Do you think I'm pretty?

Sports Updates

By Sophie Savage

The Fighting Saints are crushing it in this year's fall sports, including volleyball, soccer, cross country, and swimming!

The junior girls volleyball team took home the **gold** last month at the annual Vancouver Island University Invitational Tournament. Congratulations to the team on first place! The senior girls volleyball team placed fifth in the Brentwood College Invitational last weekend, and ended the tournament off with a great win! The team still has games, so make sure to come check them out. They play at STA November 4th against West Van at 7:30pm.



The senior boys soccer team dominated the field, finishing in second place at the BC Catholics! They started off the tournament with a 3-0 win against Archbishop Carney and a 5-0 win against St John Brebeuf. Their final game is on October 28 at Windsor at 4pm. Great job boys! A huge congratulations to the cross country team on their outstanding performances at every meet! Great work STA!

A New Spot

By Juliana S. Sestini

As we come to our third year in the school's incredible new building, it is fascinating to see that there are still areas that could be inaugurated! The Alumni/Gr 12 patio space is one of them.

A beautiful day approached Vancouver on Tuesday 19th, as all Gr. 12s and staff were invited for the inauguration of the patio space by the alumni room. The gorgeous views right in front of us as Mr. Campbell said some thoughtful words about our responsibilities as leaders of the school, and the privileges of having access to such a great spot in the school. The new patio is available for Gr. 12 students during lunch, and alumni! Yet another thing for students to look forward to as they reach their senior year here at STA. Let's put this space into good use! A special thanks to donors for making this patio a reality.



Club Promos

Want to join a club but don't know what STA offers? Take a look at some of the promos below!

Debate Club

This year, Debate club will be a riveting experience where you can express your opinion, develop argumentative skills, and eventually "pick a hill to die on." If you are interested you can come find us at senior lunch on Wednesdays. In the upcoming months we are planning to do an official live debate in the gym!

Cooking Club

Hey STA! We're so excited to bring you Cooking Club for the very first year! Come by to polish your knife skills, learn the culinary basics, and share a meal with your friends! You can find us after school in the Cafeteria on Mondays Bi-weekly!

STEM Club

Don't have any plans for Wednesdays? STEM Club is the place to be! Every Wednesday from 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm we meet up in room 203 and take part in many experiments. We allow students to collaborate in experiments such as dissection, 3D printing, riddles, and building structures. We explore a multitude of different concepts, but most of all we strive to combine scientific concepts with fun and endless possibilities to create! Come join us at our next meeting!

Chess Club

The STA CHESS CLUB is a club for all who enjoy playing fun and awesome chess games using their minds. On Friday after school, the club is open in the cafe for anyone who wants to play. We've built up a player base of experts and novices where we focus on setting up games and making everyone feel comfortable. We hope that in the future we could possibly enter inter-school competitions. Good luck!

Robotics Club

Do you like robots, competitions, and teamwork? If so, you're in the right place! STA is hosting their very own VEX Robotics Club where you (yes, you!) can join teams to design, build, and program robots to compete in tournaments against other schools! Don't miss out on all the fun by stopping by the Maker's Lab every Tuesday after school!

Peer Tutoring

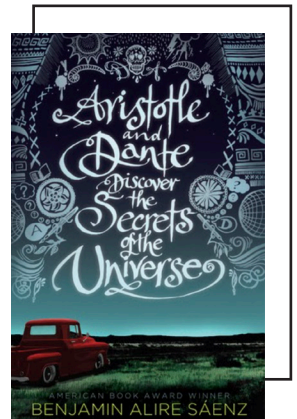
Peer Tutoring is an initiative that runs every day in the LRC alongside the homework club from 3-4 pm. It is designed to help students develop positive habits and learn the responsibility of taking their learning into their own hands. Please contact Ms. Goodsell via agoodsell@aquinas.org with your availability and subject area and we'll get you going immediately! LRC has lots of students attending Homework Club after school, please feel free to drop by and ask students if they require help for what they're working on. Granted you are off your phones, and engaging with students to create a positive atmosphere, we may provide hours for your time at our discretion. Peer Tutoring isn't just academic. It can be a mentorship opportunity. I know many 12s who made impactful friendships last year.

Book Recommendations

By Ella Edwards

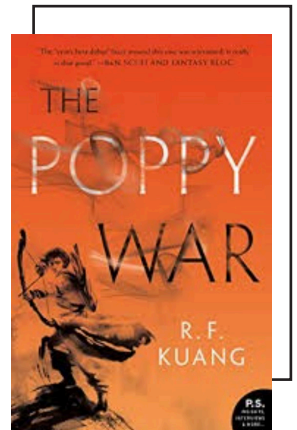
#1 Aristotle and Dante discover the secrets of the universe

A beautiful story of growing up and figuring out who you are, and how to let yourself be happy without shame. It also focuses a lot on really amazing family dynamics between Ari and his parents and Dante and his parents. An amazing read.



#2 The Poppy War

A fantasy series that still manages to feel very relevant. It shows the damages of war, and how desensitized everyone is from harm being done to anyone they see as “other”. It covers many important issues, especially relating to self medication and addiction as a result of trauma caused by the wars. One of my favourite books!



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