



INSIDE SI



VOLUME 69, ISSUE 6

THE (DIGITAL) NEWSPAPER OF ST. IGNATIUS COLLEGE PREPARATORY

FEBRUARY 14TH, 2021



INTRODUCING:VALENTINE'S DAY

Valentine's Day offers us the chance to reflect on the people in our lives who we appreciate and dare to say we love. As we finally reunite with our campus and classmates in person, we are reacquainting ourselves with what makes SI truly unique and special—it's community. *InSide SI* wants to highlight members of our community to thank for their hard work, diligence, and for inspiring us through their actions, words, and presence. We would like to thank you, our readers, and fellow members of the school community for continuing to support our publication. We are sending love your way! Our hope is that this issue reminds you to let the people in your life know how much you care about them. Happy Valentine's Day SI!



Love, The EIC Fiona McNamara '21, Josie Wall '21, Emma Stecher '21, Luke Veit '21, Fiona Baxter '21

Happy V-day Mr. Santos! -Your Golf Buddy (Mr. Joo)

To my friend in the Main Office, Ms. Balestrieri, Thanks for keeping us SWEET! Love, Ms. McKeon

Dear Ms. Nora Miller, Roses are Red. Violets are Blue. You are the best Department Chair in the whole world. And, that is why we love you!! Love, The English Department

XOXO

Mes chers étudiants de français, vous êtes Formidable ! Je suis fière de vous, de votre ténacité. Joyeuse St Valentin, Mme Vilna

My dear Chemists and AP Biologists (former and present, and those of you I do not know), Roses are red, violets are blue, you are loved simply for being you! Valentine's Day is all about love and recognizing, feeling loved. You are more loved than you will ever know. You are ENOUGH. In who you are right now, not who you will be tomorrow or next year. Never forget this. Happy Valentine's Day. Love, Ms. Shorrock Chen

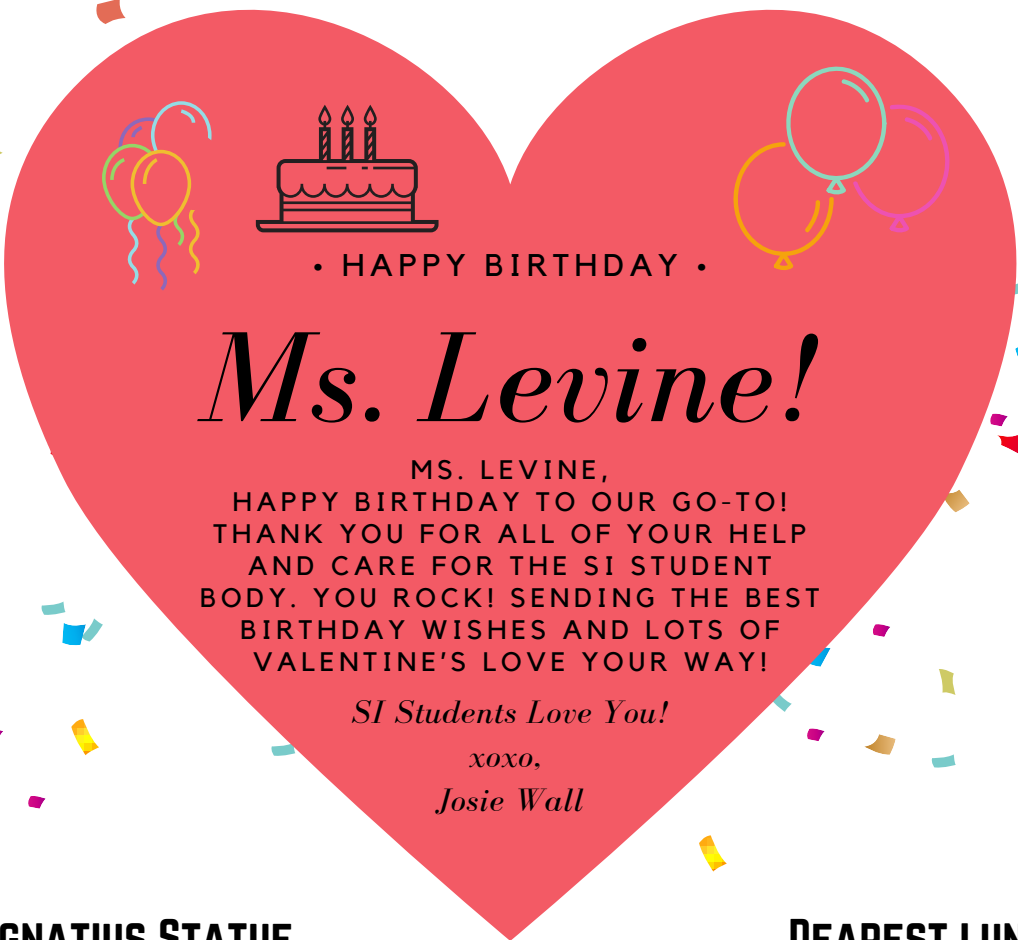
To My Wellness 9 Students, You bring me joy every time you show up! Sending love to you on Valentine's Day, Mrs. Murphy

To my dear Sophomores and my dearest Inside SI Editors, Happy Valentine's Day. As I celebrate my 50th year as a teacher this semester, you are the reasons for celebrating. In classes and in **Inside SI**, You bring me great joy and everyday remind me why teaching is such a great vocation. Blessings and much love, Peter D.

BE MINE

So much love on Valentine's Day our awesome InSignis Seniors, thank you for being so incredibly generous with your time and talents! Love, Ms. Roy & Campus Ministry

To my dear students, Thank you for being the best students in the world. I learn something from you every day in American Lit and Mythology! Love, Ms. N.



• HAPPY BIRTHDAY •

Ms. Levine!

MS. LEVINE,
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR GO-TO!
THANK YOU FOR ALL OF YOUR HELP
AND CARE FOR THE SI STUDENT
BODY. YOU ROCK! SENDING THE BEST
BIRTHDAY WISHES AND LOTS OF
VALENTINE'S LOVE YOUR WAY!

SI Students Love You!

*xoxo,
Josie Wall*

DEAR ST. IGNATIUS STATUE,

Luke Veit '21 Editor-in-Chief

We are a huge fan of your fashion sense with masks that change with the season, red for the fall and blue for the winter. Confidently striding forth on the piazza, you embody the piazza spirit — yes, it's cold out here, but yes I will eat lunch here and enjoy the view in spite of it. Your commitment to social distancing and frilufstliv (outdoor lifestyle) are truly admirable; we only hope Ginger and Roger choose to water the plants at your feet rather than your pedestal. Ignatius statue, iconic depiction of our schools namesake, companion on the walk to the 400's building, we love you.
— SI Students.

DEAREST LUNCH STAFF,

Fiona McNamara '21 Editor-in-Chief

You have gotten to the bottom of the SI students' hearts in the best way possible, through our stomachs. Indeed, no smell can compare to the infamous commons cookie's sweetly intoxicating aroma which permeates the SI halls daily. Most importantly, thank you for your patience at the chaotic cash register post when our thumbprints simply won't match our school IDs (third times right?), or when we pay in quarters, or when our MyschoolBucks gets declined.

You all have a special in our hearts not only for the sweet treats you make (including bread bowl day, a national SI student holiday) but also for your adaptability during COVID when you deliver our lunches to our classrooms with a smile on your face. Who needs Uber Eats or DoorDash when SI's finest lunch staff? You truly have made all of our days sweeter and more comforting in more ways than one. We love you and appreciate you always especially on bread bowl days.

Love always,
The SI Students <3



3 LOVE LETTERS



Dearest Ms. Brancoli and Ms. Wenger,

For so many of us, who as middle schoolers consumed the entirety of Rick Riordan's magnum opus in just a few short months, high school's onslaught of assigned readings has tarnished the delight of reading for pleasure. Whether it be blurbs in bathroom stalls or blind dates with books, you work tirelessly to help us rediscover that joy.

I have worked closely with Wilsey Library for the past few years, so I am in constant awe of your efforts to support us and create an accessible and welcoming space to all students.

Love,
Olivia

PS Thank you for teaching us how to cite our sources. Gone are the days of baldly stealing intellectual property!



To the Buildings and Ground Crew,

Thank you for making it possible for us to come back! We mean that in all sincerity, since without you all literally making the space for us to come back in one form or another, returning to campus might not have been possible.

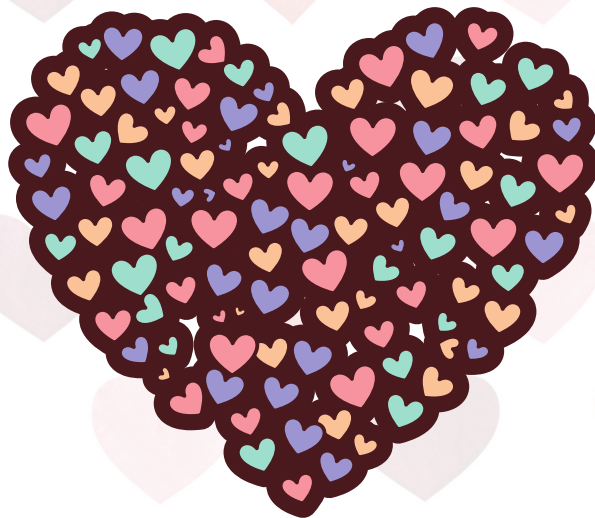
Thank you for the countless hours you spent moving filing cabinets, tables, desks, and chairs around. Having so much space in between classmates and teachers is a new and different experience, but it is all the more safer thanks to you. If it's one thing among many things that the pandemic has brought us all is the feeling of uncertainty, but it is nice to have a sense of security in the prioritization of safety that the buildings and grounds crew has given us. We are sure having to adjust, and readjust, to all of the safety guidelines and protocols was a feat unlike most we can imagine, so thank you once more for putting in all of this work into our return.

With the warmest regards,
The SI Students

Dear Campus Ministry,

Thank you so very much for your support this past year and especially for FML! From the readings, to student presidors, to the sign of peace, and homilies each and every piece of your beautiful mass brings me a sense of calm to end my busy week. Thank you for Wednesday Night Prayer with Ms. Miguens for providing me peace and laughter. Thank you to my Kairos Group. Even over Zoom you never failed to help me create connections to last a lifetime. Finally, thank you Mr. Dilag and Music Ministry. It has truly been a blessing to pray in song with you all.

Love,
Lucia Doty '21



Sweet Security Staff,

Thank you for keeping us safe even if that means busting us when we try but always fail to leave early on our resource period. Though we might seem at odds in this situation, we know deep down in our hearts that this is just because you love us and we love you too.

Your warm smiles greet us at nearly every entrance and exit and always brighten our days. The trek of coming and going to and from school would simply not be the same without you all there. You keep SI feeling safe and most importantly like home for all of us.

Xoxo,
The SI Students

To my amazing students,

I would like to express my appreciation of you. To my seniors, your engagement, thoughtfulness and brilliance have kept me going this year! Whether joking during a check in or engaging in civil dialogue on voting rights, you amaze and inspire me. I wish you nothing but joy as you move on from SI. For my juniors, your laughter, advice, wisdom and (potential) karaoke singing skills have brought me levity in these trying times. To my new ninth graders, I hope to continue building on our new community over the semester. Lots of appreciation, love and gratitude to you, my students, for all you've managed to do and achieve in the middle of a pandemic! You are the best!

Love, Ms. MZ

Dear Arrupe Social Justice Council, thanks for lighting up my Wednesdays with joy and passion. Ms. Lopez

Dear Athletics Team - You make hard work fun! Love working with my Athletics Family. Happy Valentine's Day, G

Dear FML Singers, I love your music! Thank you!

Sra. Talavan

Felix dies amoris, discipuli! Thank you for keeping our zoom sessions upbeat. Amore, Magistra Curcio

To my lovely molecular biology students. I appreciate your hard work and willingness to tackle complex ideas. And, to my biology students. I'm so impressed by your motivation and abilities during distance learning.

Wow!

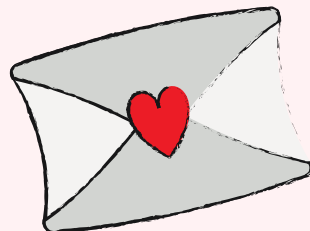
Love, Ms. Dunne

Hora 7 Español 1 Sra. Bricker 2019-20 - Les mando un gran saludo y les deseo ¡Feliz día de San Valentin! Gracias por ser una clase fantástica de español 1 :-)

Queridos estudiantes de Español 1 & Español 2H, ¡Gracias por su entusiasmo, su participación y su interés en aprender este hermoso idioma! Saludos de, Sra. Talavan

Happy Valentine's Day Brother Lee! We miss your hugs so much! Love, Ms. Roy & so many others!

Queridos estudiantes de español 3H ¡Feliz día de San Valentin! Gracias por toda la paciencia con todo lo nuevo y por ser tan abiertos al español. Les mando mucho amor, Sra. Bricker



MASHA VTORUSHINA '21

Editor-in-Chief

Luke Veit '21

Masha Vtorushina '21 loves to communicate regardless of whether it's through SI's Polyglot club, Russian, Ukrainian, Mandarin, computer programming languages, or dance. Beginning at five years old, Masha transitioned from rhythmic gymnastics to dance. Gradually she picked up different styles and methods ranging from ballet to breakdancing, but she most enjoys contemporary dance since it offers her the freedom to experiment with movement and fuse styles in unique and unusual ways. In 2015, she started competing in national dance competitions with great success. Recently she won regional champion in the 2020 Starbound dance competition, New York Dance Experience Scholarship, and the Nuvo Dance convention scholarship winner for hip-hop. She has also won the 2019 Artistic Pole Dance National Championships, 2019 Starbound Dance Competition "Miss Starbound" title winner, and been runner-up at the 2019 Velocity Dance convention. However, Masha is much more than her many dance awards; she also helps run SI's Polyglot Club as Vice President and runs social media outreach for the nonprofit Junior Robotics founded by Maanit Sharma '21.

Her love of studying language and outreach also inspired her to study coding and computer languages as Co-President of the SI chapter for Girls Who Code. Although she hopes to major in East Asian Studies and Languages in college, she plans to continue coding, dancing, and communicating.



JASON CHIU '21

Editor-in-Chief

Luke Veit '21

What would happen to death rates if a vaccine for Alzheimer's came to market in five years? As a sophomore, Jason joined his first math modeling competition and modeled a possible answer to that question. His first competition focused on medical applications of modeling, and he created a model of predicted death rates if a particular vaccine for Alzheimer's (currently in trial) proved successful. The model made it to the round of seven finalists. The competition sponsors flew Jason to Chicago to present in front of a panel of data scientists and medical advisors! That initial success hooked him on math modeling competitions.

He has since participated in several competitions throughout his time at SI including a project on a plastic bottle ban's effect on Bay Area sea otter populations and the management of a conservation fund's endowment to maximize economic impact in saving endangered species. In the latter competition, Jason ranked among the top 12% of submissions and received a "Meritorious" ranking. He enjoys the real life application and challenge of math modeling which takes concepts learned in math class and implementing them into genuine circumstances.

With Maanit Sharma '21, he founded the Machine Learning and Math Modeling club at SI to help pass on his experience in competitions. The club holds biweekly math practice sessions



and workshops to help write research papers, two integral parts of modeling. His goal is that after he graduates, students at SI will continue to enter math modeling competitions and pursue the real-world applications of what they learn in the classroom.

FR. REESE CELEBRATES 6 DECADES OF

HEARTFELT DEVOTION TO YOUTHFUL PURPOSE

Managing Editor

Jack Quach '23

For Fr. Reese, love is best shown through action. "It's important for us to say, 'I love you,'" Fr. Reese explained, "but the really important thing is showing and doing it...that's very much a part of a Jesuit education." And in January, S.I.'s beloved president celebrated 60 years of putting love into action as a Jesuit.

The world of education has always captured Fr. Reese's heart. Reese traveled through memory lane to his first day teaching high school, recounting that learning to teach history and English in the classroom was "absolutely so much fun." Once that school day ended, he stepped out onto the football field, yet another completely new environment to him. "One player asked me what position I was trying out for," Fr. Reese admitted. "I didn't have the heart to tell him I was one of the coaches."

Still, he vividly remembers how happy he was to learn along with the students on that first day, and he feels "so lucky" for his over 50 years'

experience with high schoolers. In 2016, Fr. Reese extended this love for sharing education with students when he led S.I. in its introduction of the Fr. Sauer Academy, now a cornerstone of our campus community. During COVID-19, Fr. Reese was constantly reminded of why he feels proud of his S.I. family. Even in a socially-distanced world, he said that the faculty and students continue to display an amazing response to the ever-changing challenges. "I'm proud of how students have responded to national issues and natural disasters and of how they treat each other," he added.

Despite his love for the many aspects of his day-to-day work, the most fun for Fr. Reese is watching the students mature from first-day Frosh to experienced Seniors over the years. Everyone is so open to growth and full of life, he said, noting that greeting the students with Roger and Ginger by his side is "icing on the cake."

While Fr. Reese has enjoyed the highlights of six decades as Jesuit, his favorite time is now. After all, he gets to watch how the technology we have today will "change how students learn in all different ways." He can't wait to set sail for the future.


As we all look forward to returning to campus, the plans for a new learning complex at S.I. are taking shape. These new classrooms would feature flexible walls, open space, and virtual reality, all meant to expand the learning experience. "I can just imagine a classroom watching theater performances, geography lessons, and history lessons...come alive," Fr. Reese said. A man with many loves—for God, learning, Roger and Ginger, and the student community—Fr. Reese spent more than 60 years sharing his passions with everyone in his community. This Valentine's Day, S.I. resoundingly says "We love Fr. Reese!"

RAVEN SHAW '23

Editor-in-Chief

Emma Stecher '21

Raven Shaw '23 does not recall exactly what it was that inspired her to become a speaker but she said that it has always been a big part of her life, from watching her parents and members of her Church community before her. Raven is no stranger to speaking in front of a crowd. She often speaks for several programs at her Church like Jam for Jesus and as a representative of the California Young People and Children's Division of her Church, of which she is also the president. You might know her as the preacher who delivered one of the most powerful homilies of the year at FML back in October in which she called the SI community to embrace the Beatitudes and embrace what it truly means to be blessed. Raven does not refer to herself as a preacher though. She shared that, "preacher is more of a title I feel like I can one day achieve but for now I like to call myself a speaker which is what I think I really am." In terms of what she writes, Raven said they really depend on the audience. She

said, "what is important for me is knowing that the content of what I write reaches the audience and anyone that might be listening, because I know when people really listen and that's really the fuel that drives my passion." Surely, Raven has gotten to nurture her passion even more in the past year as she noted that she thinks since the pandemic has turned many events virtual, she has been able to address more audiences and speak more. Truly, Raven models an Ignatian as she continuously shares her gifts in such loving ways both with SI and her close communities. She wants to make it clear that writing and speaking is something she wants to keep sharpening and continues to work on so she can connect with more people! If you're interested in hearing Raven speak you can ask her about any events she might be speaking at or look out for her name as she could be speaking at many more events at SI! 



7 SPOTLIGHTS

MAANIT SHARMA '21

Luke Veit '21 Editor-in-Chief

Grapes, neural nets, and Spotify may not seem obviously connected at first glance, but look no further than Maanit Sharma '21 to see how they intersect. Maanit's most recent exploit is his Spotify album that mixes blues, R&B, jazz, and Indian classical music to combine countless genres and add a unique twist. Much like the album, Maanit himself represents the fusion of many disparate activities bound together by his passion for service and ingenuity.



Maanit, who started mixing and producing music at eight years old, released Activation Functions along with Joe Armstrong '21 and Jericho Ansay '21. Armstrong and Sharma, both members of SI's Jazz band, began jamming together at a Stanford Jazz camp. This started a productive and highly collaborative partnership that has already produced one amazing album with more in the works.

The trio recorded songs separately during lockdown using software like voice memos, and GarageBand which Maanit then mixed and edited into the final eight songs which he named after a classification of mathematical functions used in neural networks and machine learning. Each song's level of syncopation mirrors the curviness of each activation function.

These unique titles came from Maanit's side project: using machine learning to code a program that could recognize the ripeness of certain fruits from just a photograph.

What had started as a personal project to help him pick perfectly ripe apples in his backyard morphed into a program that can classify grapes into seven stages of ripeness with over 93% accuracy. He hopes to test his program out on California vineyards this coming summer.

This past summer after lockdown cancelled the STEM camps that had inspired Maanit as a child, he used his experience with the Machine Learning and Math Modeling Club, which he co-founded, at SI to start a licensed nonprofit which runs lessons for over eighty middle schoolers at four schools on coding, computer science, and machine learning.

As a Calculus BC TA, and in the Math Modeling Club, Maanit has found teaching to be the best method of learning himself. This spirit of service inspires everything that he does from his music (Maanit also runs the Music For Others Club where students play music in convalescent homes) to his STEM research. Maanit's album can be found [here](#). Inside SI album rating 10/10.

Listen to Maanit's album [HERE](#)



SASHA BAKHTER '21

Luke McFadden '22

Managing Editor

SI is filled with talented and interesting students, and Sasha Bakhter is certainly one of them. On campus, Sasha is Vice President of SITV and works to compile the outstanding episodes that we see every week. SITV moderator Mr. Joo said that Sasha "will edit the final episode, take over soundstage duties, teach underclassmen, and answer emails. He is the type of student I would want as an employee of a startup." In fact, Sasha's dream job would be to start a permaculture farm that would focus on education and also serve as an Airbnb.

Off campus, Sasha is very active in nature. He mountain bikes in both the SI club and individually, and he is also a trail runner. He hopes to one day run ultramarathons. Sasha pursues his passion for videography outside of school too.



Before Covid-19 changed daily life, Sasha did a lot of general lifestyle and wedding photography at [@bakhterphotography](#). Now, he's taken his skills to the trails. He takes photos and videos of the landscape, as well as his own activities on his YouTube channel: "[Adventures by Sasha.](#)" It would behoove everyone to click "subscribe" for some awesome content.

CHECK OUT SASHA'S



VIDEOS [HERE](#)

Tommy DeBenedetti '22

The SI drama department's very own Ryan Stretch lives a secret second life as an alpaca farm hand on Martha's Vineyard. Ryan works a summer job at Island Alpaca, a commercial and recreational alpaca farm. Her various positions have included the welcome booth, customer service in the gift shop, and barn duty, which Ryan reluctantly admits is mostly cleaning alpaca poop but also gives her an excuse to be in the pen with the alpacas for hours on end, answering visitors' questions. I have tested her and can confirm that she is very



Ryan Stretch '22 hugs an adorable alpaca on her grandparents' farm.

RYAN STRETCH '22Managing Editor

knowledgeable in alpaca care; fun fact: a baby alpaca is called a cria! While Ryan was visiting her grandparents on Martha's Vineyard this past fall, her old boss asked her if she could pick up a few shifts; through her Instagram takeover, the junior class got an insider view of the alpaca farm life and fell in love with all the alpacas, including Ryan's favorite, Sengie. SI loves Ryan because her bubbly personality brightens people's days wherever she goes and she's the best alpaca farmer we know.

Tommy DeBenedetti '22

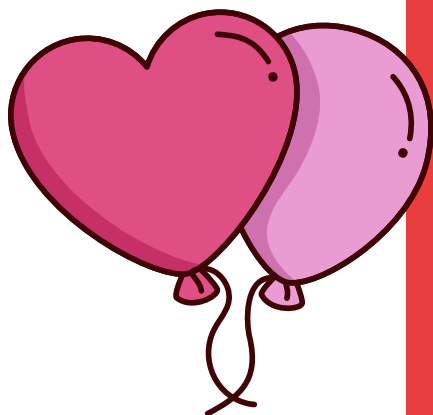
If you don't know her name, you definitely know her voice. Junior Alessia Gatti sings regularly with Music Ministry at Friday Morning Liturgies and has had solo features at several all-school prayer services; even with the transition to virtual FMLs, Alessia has remained one of the consistent singers. In addition to filling the Orradre Chapel with her powerful voice, Alessia spends her time out of school writing, recording, and producing music independently. She says she first started writing

ALESSIA GATTI '22Managing Editor

music when she was only six, but as she has grown it has become a more serious creative outlet and hobby. Alessia released her first single "Violet" on Soundcloud in 2019 and followed it with two more; she is currently working on music that she plans to release in the coming months. Anyone who has listened to her music will agree that it is seriously a beautiful gift. Find her on Soundcloud as Alessia Gatti or come to an FML in the near future and you will likely hear her there.



Click on Alessia's picture to listen to her original songs on Soundcloud!

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY!****XOXO, Inside SI**

Special thank you to everyone who helped work on this issue!

Fiona Baxter '21, Fiona McNamara '21, Emma Stecher '21, Luke Veit '21, Josie Wall '21, Tommy DeBenedetti '22, Reilly Derrick '22, Jack Quach '23, Lindsay Yamamura '22, Allie Wall '24, Luke McFadden '22, and of course our benevolent censors Mr. Peter Devine and Ms. Carole Nickolai. We love you all!