The Double - Edged Sword

The Original Student Newspaper of St. Paul High School

ISSUE NO. I *09/25/2026*

St. Paul Announces 2026 Homecoming Court

- Aaliyah Galdamez, Class of 2029

On Friday, September 18, St. Paul congratulated our top-ten ladies who were voted by their senior class to be part of the 2026 Homecoming Court. This includes Lidia Araya, Tyler Bowers, Ava Burgos, Marley Mancinas, Claire Marin, Miranda Nuno, Roxanne Quinonez, Camila Solis, Amaralis Zavala, and Bella Zendzhiyan.

The official 2026 Homecoming Queen will be announced October 9th, with the top-five in voting being released beforehand as well.

To learn more about the experience, I sat down with Homecoming Court candidate Lidia Araya, who said that she was named among the ten: “Honestly, I was really surprised and shocked. I didn’t expect to be chosen at all, so I was really happy and grateful in the moment.”

Lidia continued by saying, “What made it even more special was seeing the other nine girls because they’re all some of my closest friends. It made me really happy knowing I got to experience this with people I really value. Overall, I was just really grateful and shocked that I was chosen.”

Finally, she expressed the significance of being part of the court, stating that, “It means a lot to me because it reminds me to keep being myself. I’ve always tried to be genuine and make the most out of the people and experiences around me. I think being chosen showed me that those things really do matter. It makes me want to keep being myself and not feel like I have to change for other people.”

Lidia’s answer provides a personal look into the weight of being selected to Homecoming Court at when St. Paul. With October 9th appearing on the horizon, swordsmen eagerly await both the names of the top-five girls as well as the crowning of St. Paul’s 2026 Homecoming Queen in the coming weeks. Best of luck, girls!



Peggysue sits down with Coach Wittmer and key players ahead of Paraclete, pg.3



Josephine Mancinas heats up on AI Data Centers, pg. 6





Emmy Sifuentes outlines what's in and what's out at St. Paul in Setptember, pg. 9

Photos courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

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Plants vs Restaurants

- Nicholas Razo, Class of 2029

In pure *Plants vs. Zombies* fashion, the City of Santa Fe Springs is in the midst of a battle with one hundred-plus gardeners. The battlefield? Santa Fe Springs Community Garden. The reason? Mandatory relocation of the garden, which has caused tension between the city and the gardeners. It was time for the plants of Santa Fe Springs Community Garden to defend their land from the invading restaurants.

The Santa Fe Springs Community Garden has been located on 10145 Pioneer Blvd for over thirty years; however, the City has decided that the garden will be relocated fifty yards away to make space for a new restaurant, closing the original garden. The issue came up on August 21, with a letter issued by the city notifying gardeners that the site would be relocated.

During a community meeting on September 9, city officials provided reasoning for the relocation and answered multiple questions from the community. During this meeting, numerous concerns were voiced by the attendees. Many believed that the garden being moved was unnecessary, that they were being pressured into signing government paperwork, and that it would be cruel to move a garden with more than 30 years of history.

The deadline for when gardeners needed to vacate the current location (originally scheduled for the end of September) was renegotiated during this meeting. Details of the parcel layout for the new location were also shared. Several individuals who attended the community meeting have continued to voice their concerns via online local groups such as Facebook and Nextdoor.

Previously, gardeners were expected to sign a Mutual Termination and General Release Waiver to finalize the transition. Gardeners who complied were eligible to apply for a parcel in the new location. After the deadline was renegotiated to the end of the year, the gardeners were not required to sign these documents. This change eased the minds of many gardeners who were previously unwilling to sign any government documents.

An understanding was thought to be agreed on during these community meetings; however, soon after the meeting, multiple residents continued to scrutinize the decision. Many think that the city is hiding details about the true reason why the garden is being relocated; others believe that the city does not see the garden as a valuable part of Santa Fe Springs, and some have come to the conclusion that the city is neglecting the inquiries of gardeners.

As of September 15, the decision to relocate the garden has been finalized. During the council meeting, many people voiced their agreement with the decision, while others voiced their disagreement. So, who truly won this battle? The plants, or the restaurants?



Photos courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Predicting a Push Past Paraclete

- Peggysue Ledesma and Mia Lopez, Class of 2029

The St. Paul Swordsmen have stumbled into the season with a shaky start, earning a 1-4 record after a tough loss to Redondo Union last Friday, which many players were hoping would be a revenge game from last season. However, on October 2nd, St. Paul's football squad will be seeing some new faces don the sword as numerous transfer students become eligible when the new-look Swordsmen look to grapple with the Paraclete Spirits, also sitting at 1-4.

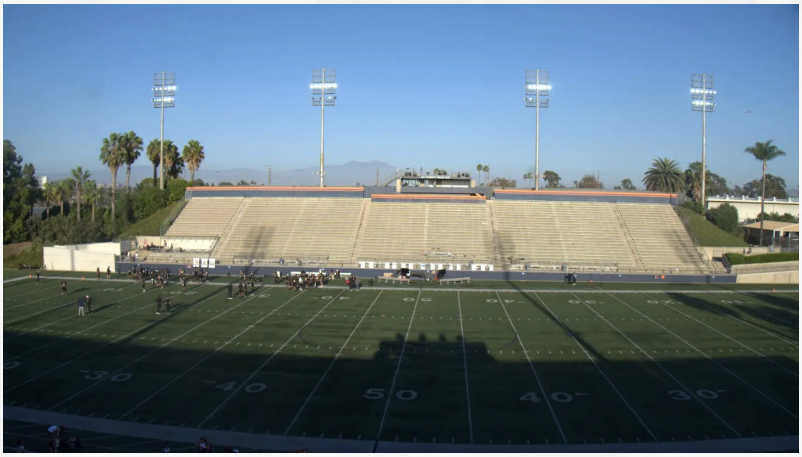


Photo Courtesy of Michael Aragonez, Class of 2029

This past week, the Swordsmen were on bye in preparation for the big game and the onset of league play. Assistant Head Coach and Geometry teacher at St. Paul, Coach Joseph Wittmer, said, “Bye week is having a week off to recover our bodies after a rough start, especially with our transfers not being eligible to play yet. It’s also a way to strategize our inputs for the following week, and to get ready for all of our league games.”

As Coach Wittmer said, this bye week came at a pivotal time for the Swordsmen: league play starts, but the transfers can truly be unleashed. After a frustrating four games to start the year, junior safety Visi Aseh is fired up and excited to join his teammates under the lights against Paraclete: “I’m ready to prove to my team that I can be a helpful asset to the defense, and prove to my coaches that I’m an important player and that there is a reason I’m here.”

On Friday, October 2nd, Visi will wear the famed sword decal on his helmet for the first time alongside sophomore transfer Markice Leonard, who is a stout defensive lineman. Leonard possesses the build to bully opposing linemen and erupt through offensive lines, which can help create a variety of defensive packages for the Swordsmen. After his freshman year at Compton High School, he decided to attend St. Paul and said, “I transferred because St. Paul has great competition, exposure, and a coaching staff who makes me and my teammates feel at home.” The St. Paul family is beyond enthusiastic to welcome these young men to campus and the football field as well.

These transfers could not have become eligible at a more critical time, with St. Paul having quite a bit to prove in the opening of league play. However, this will not be simply a battle on the field for forty-eight minutes. Paraclete will push the Swordsmen and their mental game to the edge. Following their shaky start to the season, St. Paul has received significant hate and doubt online via X, Instagram, and TikTok. With this game, the Swordsmen can silence doubters and reestablish a legacy of victory and conquest at St. Paul.

Predicting a Push Past Paraclete contd.

- Peggysue Ledesma and Mia Lopez, Class of 2029



Left to right: Luis Gonzalez, Visa Aseh, Kevin Garcia, Markice Leonard, Coach Wittmer, Visi Aseh, Jeremiah Tahaafe, Josh Villalta
Photo Courtesy of Peggysue Ledesma, Class of 2029

Senior center Luis Gonzalez, who has consistently been a bulldozer during his time anchoring the line, is locked in and ready to go against the Spirits: “My mindset and focus for this game is to prove the doubters wrong. Every day I feel like we hear something new from people online, and we try not to focus on that. To make myself clear, I DO NOT let that interfere with my mindset because I know my team and I know the hours of work that we put in on and off the field every day.”

He continued his impassioned speech by saying: “I trust the team and that we can put a good product out on that field because at the end of the day it’s all us and that’s all that I need.” As Luis mentioned, next Friday’s clash will be a game of opportunity and to prove St. Paul’s worth.

Score Predictions:

Mr. Nichols: 28-17 SPHS

Ms. Gonzalez: 20-14 SPHS

During the bye week, the swordsmen have been working quite hard and appear more ready than ever before to put on the pads and go hit somebody. Sophomore linebacker Visa Hufanga said, “ I feel good and prepared. I feel that these past 5 weeks I haven’t showcased my real talent and skill, but going into the league, I feel confident in our new start with a new defense. I think this matchup means a lot to the team because these past five weeks haven’t been our best, but with all of our transfers, the offense is going to be way different from before.”

Visa carried on his rallying cry and wanted to shout out his new teammates as well: “I also feel confident in our defense, especially Visi and Markice, because I know they are going to make a big impact...With a complete team, I think we will all together have a better mindset and a better set goal.”

With Visa and the transfers getting loud and amplifying the defense, junior quarterback Josh Villatla is feeling steady and prepared on the offensive side of the ball: “ I feel good. I think our transfers are going to help us out a lot. We’ve gone through a lot of hard weeks...I’m just looking forward to a new start, and a new chance to prove ourselves.” Now that you’ve heard from your swordsmen, it’s up to you to support your team next week @ Paraclate 7pm.

Live by the sword, die by the sword; as always, gooooo Swordsmen!!

Recapping the NFL Weeks 1-2

- Madison Villalobos and Caleb Samaniego, Class of 2029

Super Bowl Rematch to Kickoff the Season:

The inaugural game of the 26-27 NFL season was a rare Super Bowl rematch in which the champion Seattle Seahawks hosted the New England Patriots. During the first quarter of the game, Seahawks field general Sam Darnold went down with a hip injury, which forced backup Drew Lock onto the field.

Within the first half of the game, the Patriots took a 7-0 lead by scoring a 2-yard touchdown, soon paired with a 50-yard rocket field goal, to put the Pats up double digits going into the locker room. However, New England's sorcery ended its luck when free agent acquisition A.J. Brown suffered a right ankle injury, which caused him to exit the game.

Under the surprising hand of Lock, the Seahawks were finally able to break free of their slump and hit a 30-yard chip shot to get on the board. Three picks by Patriots' quarterback Drake Maye by the stingy Seattle secondary led to a tied game before the Seahawks scored the game-winning 25-yard field goal, closing the night at 13-10.

Notable Players Injured:

The first two weeks have seen an uncharacteristic amount of injuries happen. Saquon went down early with a stinger before later returning in the second half (although not to fantasy football relevance). The Rams saw Puka's hip soreness keep him from week-two action, while the aforementioned A.J. Brown, Colts wideout Alec Pierce, and newly acquired Rams superstar Myles Garrett were all placed on Injured Reserve (IR) sidelining them for four games minimum.

The league's top tight end, Brock Bowers, has been out for the initial action due to a meniscus trim, but should soon be back to soothe the hearts of Raiders nation. Prominent quarterbacks Caleb Williams (hamstring), Jayden Daniels (elbow), and Jaxson Dart (knee), the last of whom is out for the season. Coach Wittmer had this to say regarding the prominent injuries: "Knees weak, arms spaghetti."



Photo Courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Week One All-Time Points Record:

This past opening week of the NFL tied the all-time record for most points scored in the first week, matching 2012 with 791total points scored across all sixteen games. It was a weekend for high-octane offenses and shootouts, with the Chicago Bears and Carolina Panthers game ending at an astounding 59-37. These points were not only scored in blowout games, but also in very close fourth-quarter lock-ins, as numerous games went into overtime, notably the Shough-led Saints falling late to the Lions after a storied comeback. Shoutout to the Rams for being embarrassed in Australia on Thursday night; unlike the Rams, the Niners actually know how to plan for international travel!

Heating Our Lives and Their Oceans

-Josephine Mancinas, Class of 2029

The Earth's oceans are warming by means of two factors, both of which we can change. The first is global warming, which has affected our planet for many years, while the second problem has only been around since 2023 and continues through the present: A.I. underwater data centers (or UDC's), off the coasts of several countries.

A great amount of energy is required for these UDC's to function; Cornell researchers have learned that the current rate of A.I. growth could annually put twenty-four to forty-four million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by 2030. This amount is equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of three to six million American households. As said in a recent article by Oceana, "AI data centers feed the climate change that is warming & acidifying the oceans." To run such centers on land is already damaging enough to the environment, but to place them into the water is even more damaging in the long run.

In the information gathered by a January article in *Discover Magazine*, it is estimated that AI data centers will surpass 20% of global energy demand within the next four years. This means that by 2030, these data centers will increase the amount of energy that the world needs by 20%. This growth will contribute to global warming and heatwaves that have already begun to occur. With these current factors, the ocean's temperatures are on the rise.

All the more, when you consider the construction of the UDC's, our global temperature will spike to even higher degrees. A 2022 study in *Scientific Reports* found that when A.I. data centers intake warm water, they eventually release it back at an even higher temperature. As a result, the water required to cool UDC's contributes to a globe that is continually heating up.

Furthermore, an additional effect of putting the AI data centers underwater is sea levels rising. This is especially frightening because as glaciers are melting, sea levels could rise by an alarming 195 feet; these increased sea levels trigger flooding, coastal erosion, and land loss. New York, Boston, and our very own Los Angeles are all cities projected to be affected by land loss due to rising sea levels in the coming decades. Essentially, any city that is located near or along the coast can and likely will be affected by the rising sea level caused by climate change and spurred along by the construction of UDC's.

China and Scotland are two prominent countries that have placed many of these hot, energy-hungry UDC's underwater, affecting the adjacent ocean ecosystems as well. Dr. Kathryn Matthews, Oceana's chief scientist and senior vice president, said, "Right now, so much AI is unnecessary or even damaging... Ultimately, we must stay focused on directing these technologies in ways that genuinely help out communities and ecosystems."

Heating Our Lives and Their Oceans contd.

-Josephine Mancinas, Class of 2029

Animals throughout the world are in danger of losing their homes due to warming oceans. Scotland, a global hub for UDCs, harbors bottlenose dolphins, gray seals, Eurasian otters, and orcas which have become imperiled. In China, native species such as the vulnerable Chinese white dolphin are in even more danger. When countries like these place data centers along the ocean, they are indirectly harming the wildlife that lives and thrives in those spaces, ultimately destroying their habitats and populations.



Photo courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Overall, A.I. data centers are being built and placed inside our oceans, causing further damage that not only affects our lives, but the lives of aquatic animals as well. The warming of our oceans is becoming increasingly evident, and we can make a change, even if it is small. The simplest (yet also significant) of these changes is to stop the utilization of A.I. for generating images, videos, and doing your assignments. The continued use of A.I. for such trivial matters will not only help with slowing the rising temperatures but also enhance your educational capabilities for the greater good.

Citations:

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The Battle to Ban Books

- Galilea Placencia, Class of 2030

Every year, numerous books are threatened to be stripped off shelves. Within the past few years, over 7,200 books have been challenged and in 2025, the American Library Association (ALA) lists the official count of banned books at 5,668 titles, with an extra 920 texts being restricted in some form.

For the majority of bans, books are restricted due to violence, profanity, sensitive themes and other offensive statements within the text, such as differing religious points of view, and speaking out against the government. However, most of the time a book is pulled off the shelf for bias and unjust reasons. Adults say it is to “protect young minds,” but whose minds are we really protecting? We need to expose the younger generation to the real world, so they can learn to get by on their own and grow empathy.

One popular banned book, which many St. Paul students are familiar with is *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton. Although the title is not nationally banned, some public school districts have challenged and restricted this book. Hinton’s coming-of-age novel includes frequent mentions of gang violence and substance usage among the protagonists.

While her novel is traditionally read around grade seven, adults have been found issue with the book’s underlying themes of drinking, smoking, familial dysfunction, and teen violence. However the book teaches its readers important lessons, such as maintaining innocence and looking past someone’s social status.

Another often-banned book is *Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, even though it is a children's book. The banning of White’s novel is often cited for “religious objections over talking animals and themes of mortality." You mean to tell me, this book is banned in schools because of talking animals? You have got to be kidding me! By this logic, you might as well ban all the Disney movies, right? Sorry Mickey, you have to go!

In 2006, a parent meeting was held in Kansas, where they said that talking animals are "unnatural and blasphemous" because “humans are the highest level of creation.” It is a children’s book for crying out loud. Their kid is busy laughing about a talking pig and the parents believe it is going to alter their future for the worse.

Other honorable mentions are *Looking for Alaska*, *To Kill a Mocking Bird*, *The Catcher in the Rye*, *Fahrenheit 451*, and an abundance of other titles regularly deemed to be classics of high school education. Each book I just mentioned is either banned or is currently being challenged to get banned.

As an avid book reader, I hate this! If adults don't want their children reading about certain topics, they can research them ahead of time, before they go rushing to challenge the book and school access to said book. If parents have mature and responsible children, they ought be content if their children stay within their age range of books.

Books are wonderful works composed by very talented authors that should be safeguarded and cherished, with school access being protected, not challenged.

"All the World's a Stage": St. Paul's New Theater Completes Construction

-Anabella Bravo, Class of 2029

With construction for the new theater wrapping up in August, the updated addition to St. Paul High School came with a remarkably long and strenuous process.

To better understand all facets of the construction process, I sat down with Mr. Caleb Miller (Mr. C), who operates as the teacher of Theater Arts and director of the SPHS Theater Company; he provided The Double-Edged Sword with insightful information and context.

While students waited for a large section of campus to return to use, it was a lengthy campaign on the technical side of things. During mid-pandemic in 2020, the SHEA Foundation (created by a family located in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles that equips various Catholic schools with renovations), had come to St. Paul, offering a new construction proposal and ideas on what could be built.

Mr. C had pitched the idea of a simple black box theater. After six months, the Shea family had requested an updated version of the plan for their architect. Outfitted with an expanded budget, the vision for the new theater extended into something bigger.

Del Amo Construction of Torrance pioneered the building of the theater; the next two years included numerous meetings and discussions on what the responsibilities were for St. Paul, including payments and other miscellaneous matters. The theater was originally going to be built in the 500 building, but was moved to the 400 due to easier electrical work and not to disrupt too many classrooms.



Construction finally began at the two-year mark: "It was insane to think it was real," Mr. C stated. "It's what I dreamt of when I was a student here at St. Paul." Originally, construction was supposed to be finished within a year, but that didn't happen. With issues arising and construction not always easy, the entire process took longer than expected.

With construction closing the curtain in August and passing the necessary safety inspections, the theater and the 400 building will be open soon for use. Mr. C's hopes for this theater are to make the arts more recognized on campus, not just by the viewers, but also by the students of this program and all those outside it. He wants students to know the feeling of being on a real stage, explaining the incomplete feeling of acting without an established theater: "It's like playing football without a field."

Mr. C has expressed his gratitude many times to everyone who made this possible, describing it as "such a gracious gift from God." Additionally, he noted the dedication of St. Paul's past theater students (before we had a formal program), who were required to skip sixth period to make it for rehearsal at another school. This is a display of the amount of love that everyone in the SPHS Theater Company puts into their work, as the saying goes: "Do what you love with people you love. God bless."

Upcoming Shows:

"Noises Off": December 3, 4, 5 & 6

"Just Another High School Play": December 10, 11,12 & 13

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September Ins and Outs @ SPHS

-Emmy Sifuentes, Class of 2030

WHAT'S IN AT ST. PAUL:

- Carrying a 40-ounce water bottle that looks bulletproof
- Boys spraying the full bottle of cologne in one go
- Having open tabs of Cool Math Games
- Stopping in the hallways to talk with friends and cause traffic
- Having mechanical pencils that always break when you need them most and run out of lead quickly
- Migrating to the Learning Commons for class
- Asking to go to the bathroom to take a leisurely sightseeing journey through campus
- Praying that 3rd period will end



WHAT'S OUT AT ST. PAUL:

- Having a regular-sized water bottle
- Boys wearing durable deodorant that lasts all day
- Having tabs open to finish other assignments
- Zooming through the hallways to not be late
- Using standard Ticonderoga #2 pencils
- Trying to outlast the heat in the classroom
- Actually going to the bathroom when you have to
- Finding ways to make the most of 3rd period





**This monthly segment of the Comedy Corner is brought to you by In-N-Out Burgers, Inc.
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This Week's Word Search Theme...St. Paul Faculty!

N	B	J	R	B	R	D	G	Q	B	Z	H	D	K	O	Z	R	H	X	M	E	M	G
C	I	I	A	K	N	U	H	L	Y	N	C	H	A	K	B	C	P	X	N	P	I	A
J	V	C	P	L	E	E	B	O	P	R	N	A	I	L	O	R	K	N	P	Z	T	L
E	I	Z	H	A	V	U	Z	L	G	E	N	L	N	Y	H	A	M	Z	N	S	C	O
Z	D	E	B	O	T	A	Q	L	Y	M	R	I	X	N	T	Y	F	H	Y	P	H	S
O	O	L	S	G	L	I	R	U	A	T	R	E	C	X	E	A	F	P	M	Q	E	A
N	S	A	B	R	J	S	N	E	E	T	A	Z	Z	H	T	S	L	E	D	R	L	P
A	O	Z	A	R	V	U	X	O	Z	I	S	L	T	T	A	I	L	T	K	R	L	P
T	D	N	H	Y	F	P	K	Z	J	W	I	I	N	I	W	N	N	E	Z	F	O	A
N	R	O	L	A	A	V	I	N	A	S	L	E	S	D	K	T	D	G	Y	V	V	C
O	A	G	G	V	R	F	K	E	D	O	M	I	N	G	U	E	Z	L	L	F	Q	G
M	C	N	E	I	L	T	F	R	M	C	H	K	Y	Z	M	G	B	X	E	E	V	X
V	I	L	L	E	G	A	S	O	O	R	E	L	L	I	M	M	U	K	X	R	F	D
E	V	B	D	S	V	M	J	L	R	N	O	X	I	D	J	D	X	M	K	U	E	F
X	D	G	A	R	C	I	A	P	S	J	B	Z	A	D	N	O	T	K	A	J	S	A
M	F	M	L	K	K	E	L	L	Y	A	R	V	G	I	I	R	Z	N	O	U	R	W

Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden ↑ and ↓ and → and ← and ↘

ALVAREZ
ANNESLEY
AVINA
CAPPASOLA
CARDOSO
CHANDLER
DIXON
DOMINGUEZ
DUGUMA
GARCIA
GONZALEZ
HART
KELLY
LORENZO
LYNCH
MCNEIL
MILLER
MITCHELL
MONTANO
NICHOLS
PATINO
PEREZ
RAYAS
RUBLY
TINGLEFF
VILLEGAS
VU
WITTMER

ISSUE NO. I | The Staff | 09/25/2026

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*And another special thank you to Coach Wittmer, Mr. C, Lidia Araya, Visa Hufanga, Visi Aseh, Jeremiah Tahaafe, Markice Leanard, Luis Gonzalez, Kevin Garcia, Jace Levario, and Josh Villalta for taking time to sit down with our staff writers!

Interested in Joining the Double-Edged Sword?

Email jnichols@stpaulhs.org or kgonzalez@stpaulhs.org for more information.

We meet Fridays during lunch in room 106 to plan and write articles!



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