The Double - Edged Sword

The Original Student Newspaper of St. Paul High School

ISSUE NO. II *10/09/2026*

Seniors Glow at Sunrise

- Peggysue Ledesma, Class of 2029

Friday, September 25th was a morning full of excitement, pride, and bittersweet nostalgia as the Swordsmen class of 2027 celebrated their Senior Sunrise. The 12th-grade Swordsmen arrived at St. Paul before the sun came out, ready to conquer the day.

Senior Sunrise is an annual tradition where the graduating class arrives at school before dawn; it includes time for games, food, and interactions with classmates as their senior year breezes by. The seniors arrived at 6:00 am in their cozy pajamas, while some even brought a nice little Starbucks coffee to enjoy. Upon arrival, the seniors used their time to take pictures with beautifully created photo ops and posters.

At sunrise, the seniors said a beautiful opening prayer (led by religion teacher Mr Lorenzo) before enjoying a delicious breakfast put together by St. Paul's Mom's Club. Senior Shane Ortega was enjoying his time and said: " Senior sunrise is going great, and the food was delicious!" While the seniors sat together eating breakfast, they watched their class movie, *Toy Story*. As the seniors finished up their food, they snapped a couple more pics before moving to the football field.

On the football field, the seniors played games like volleyball, *Spikeball*, soccer, and *Jenga*. While playing games, seniors were more than happy to share what made the morning so special for them. Fourth-year student Lidia Araya said, " Senior sunrise is amazing; it's crazy to think that I was once so eager for this day to happen, and now that it's here, it all feels bittersweet. My favorite part so far is the opportunity to hang out with the people I love most during this huge step in life." With the sun climbing the morning sky and the clock getting closer to 8:00 am, the seniors started to clean and prepare for classes.

Thank you to our Mom's Club and ASB for putting together such a great morning as both organizations stayed at school the previous night until 8:00 pm and arrived at 5:00am the morning of sunrise to make this event one to remember. Senior Andrew Collins expressed his gratitude by saying, "This was such a great morning, and I appreciate all who made this day possible." Now that's a wrap on the senior sunrise of 2026. Good luck to all of our seniors, and see you at sunset! So long, partner.

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Emmy calls for faculty to further consider intentionality when assigning homework, pg. 6



Josephine digests a colossal competition, pg. 9

Photo courtesy of @stpaulbaseball via instagram

Photos courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Recapping the Relay for Life

- Madison Villalobos, Class of 2029

September 26th saw the Santa Fe Springs Relay for Life hosted in Little Lake Park. The annual fundraising event is hosted by the American Cancer Society and aims to celebrate loved ones who have passed from cancer, people who are still fighting their battle, and survivors alike.

At 10 a.m., the event had a survivor brunch, followed by an opening ceremony and the start of the famous walk. This year had a theme called "tackle cancer," with everyone having a football-themed tent. The attendees had pop-up stands that included goodies like food, drinks, desserts, jewelry, and gadgets.

After the walk had begun, the Santa Fe High School marching band and color guard performed. They were quickly joined by firefighters and police officers, who brought out their vehicles. During the day, each tent is required to make sure they do a lap with their spirit stick to show that cancer never sleeps. At the end, it is announced who had the most spirit and who had the best tent.

The Santa Fe Springs Pageant girls were in attendance (including St. Paul's own Roxanne Quinonez), as they made their rounds and greeted others. There were bouncy houses, horseshoe toss, a two-person car race, and footballs to toss around. Numerous bands performed on the stage throughout the day, along with another





performance from the Norwalk Lancers around 6pm. Despite the heat, smiles were a frequent sight, as attendees of all ages were hanging out with friends, playing games, or just spending time with their family.

After it got dark, the Relay For Life organizers had a cancer survivor come on stage and speak about his journey. He discussed the extent to which it changed his life, and how after having cancer, your "normal" isn't normal anymore. Near the end of the event, there was a ceremony where everyone gathered in a line by the stage and walked about halfway around the track. It's dark and only lit by people's signs or candles, as it is to honor everyone dealing with or who has dealt with cancer. The night is closed with fireworks being sent off following the final walk.

The Relay for Life is a very meaningful event that raises money for cancer research every year. Attending the event makes you realize how many lives cancer affects (particularly families of patients and survivors). This event is not only in Santa Fe Springs, but has spread worldwide since its 1985 origins in Tacoma, Washington to continue raising money and support for those who are battling cancer.

Senior Swordsman, Roxanne Quinonez (right), was one of the Santa Fe Springs pageant girls in attendance Photos courtesy of Olivia Moran

Baseballers Battle for Coveted Roster Spots

- Ariana Murillo, Class of 2030

Photo courtesy of @stpaulbaseball via instagram

After two months of training, the St. Paul Baseball coaches have been asking themselves: who has what it takes? Recently, St. Paul's baseball team began sorting through recruits as tryouts began on September 26th. The Swordsmen immediately got to work to see who's "making it to the big leagues" and will represent the team on either Varsity or Junior Varsity in the spring season.

Players were amped up for the tryouts, while also appearing a bit nervous to impress the coaches with their baseball skills. Coach RJ and Coach Lan were even more eager to see the player showcase that was fall tryouts; it's their position to trim the recruits into a final roster prior to the team's first clash: an away game against La Sierra on February 15th.

Well done to the players who survived cuts, securing a spot on the team! Coach Lan and Coach RJ finalized their decision on September 30th for who will be wearing the "SP" on their baseball helmet come springtime! While Varsity will be announced closer to the season's start, the players were relieved but also determined to prove to the coaches that they made the right decision.

First-year catcher Albert Lazo was especially grateful for the coaches throughout the selection process: "I believe the coaches helped us and guided us throughout our tryouts," he said after making the team cuts. Fellow freshman and second baseman, David Munoz, was feeling particularly dialed in when he got the call-up: "The grind doesn't take days off, so why should we?"



With a new crop of freshmen poised to make some noise in the race for varsity, both new and returning players trust and believe that the coaches can lead them through the offseason in preparation for February ball. Albert stated that many players shared a similar sentiment for the offseason now that cuts have concluded: "I believe we all did good but we all have room for improvement."



With every pitch, catch, and swing, the baseball swordsmen continue to improve their skills on the field in the current stretch of offseason training; now, we will have to be patient alongside them to see how the ballplayers perform come the scuffle against La Sierra on February 15th. Pressure makes diamonds.

Photographed above: David Munoz (top) and Albert Lazo (bottom)

Futbol Slides into International Break

- Annica Mota Class of 2029 and Emmy Sifuentes Class of 2030

The Men's International Soccer Break has officially come and gone, as many exhilarating games were played, living up to the anticipation. The break began on September 21st and closed on October 6th, making this sixteen-day intermission the longest ever.

During this break, players from the five major European men's leagues (England's Premier League, Spain's La Liga, Italy's Serie A, Germany's Bundesliga, and France's Ligue 1) temporarily left their respective club teams to play for their home country; no league-related games are permitted to be played during this time. Each country played four games for their homeland, whether it was a friendly match or for the UEFA Nations League, which is a more competitive tier-based contest. This year's break was merged into one continuous, three-week break for ease of travel instead of having the ordinary pair of two-week breaks that are separate from one another. Many major games were played, starring the biggest names in the sport, like Erling Haaland, Kylian Mbappe, Lamine Yamal!



Summer sensation, Erling Haaland, had a valiant performance for Norway to start international play Photo Courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Best Games:

Norway 3 – 2 Denmark (September 24) UEFA

After receiving international attention during the World Cup race this past summer, Erling Haaland led Norway to a 3-2 victory over Denmark; he scored a pair of goals (called a brace) to secure the win. The 6'5" Norwegian frontman slotted home the pair of goals with his left foot, with assists from Antonio Nusa and Arsenal's midfield sensation Martin Ødegaard. Haaland brought his international goal record to sixty-four and later raised it to sixty-five after a tough 2-1 loss to Portugal. Norway's next games were played on October 1st versus Wales, resulting in a 2-1 loss, and again on October 4th (in a rematch against Portugal), ending in another 2-1 loss. Denmark would move on to win 2-0 versus Wales, lose 4-2 against Portugal, and play Wales once again to a 1-0 victory.

Spain 3 – 2 England (September 26) UEFA

Lamine Yamal, Mikel Oyarzabal, and Álex Baena all scored goals to give another victory to the World Champions versus England last Saturday. Standouts included Spanish midfielder Dani Olmo, who strung together attacks for Spain and provided an assist to Álex Baena. For the English, Jude Bellingham had a particularly strong outing, creating a penalty chance for England, organizing the team, and assisting Anthony Gordon on the Three Lions' first goal.

Spain would go undefeated in their next

Futbol Slides into International Break contd.

- Annica Mota Class of 2029 and Emmy Sifuentes Class of 2030

three battles: two victories over Croatia with scores of 4-1 and 2-1 respectively, along with a 3-1 win against Czechia for the sweep. England followed their narrow loss to Spain with trio of defensive shutouts: a combined 5-0 win over two games versus Czechia and a 7-0 annihilation of Croatia.

France 1 – 0 Belgium (September 28) UEFA

After getting injured during their first game of the group stage, French superstar Kylian Mbappé has been recovering at Real Madrid's training facilities. For France, it has been a significant struggle to score without Mbappé. Head Coach Zidane stated, "We will not take risks," signifying Mbappé has been out of the lineup to prevent reaggravation of his injury. France defeated Belgium with a tight 1-0 win on September 28th. There were multiple opportunities for both teams to score and take the lead, but Frenchman Michael Olise managed to find the back of the net in the 88th minute, after being subbed in ten minutes before. France followed the victory with a tie against Italy before a more convincing 4-1 victory over Belgium on October 5th.



Argentina 4 – 0 Bolivia (September 30) and Argentina 3 - 0 Benin (October 6) Friendly

Argentina began international play with a 4-0 win against Bolivia. Following the victory, many fans prepared for Lionel Messi's last international game with Argentina, which was a bout against Benin. Fans nicknamed the matchup "El Último Tango", meaning "the last tango." After scoring from a penalty, Messi was shown much gratitude by fans from both teams. This moment was quite significant, wrapping up his Argentina National Team career as their top goal scorer with 126 goals, 208 appearances, 1 World Cup Title, and 2 Copa América titles. Even though this was Messi's last international match, it marked the start of Argentina's run with a new generation of players eager to make a name for themselves as the G.O.A.T. takes his place at the mountaintop.

USA 3 – 0 Mexico (October 3) Friendly

Since their last game of the World Cup, a major change has occurred for the United States Men's National Team (USMNT) regarding their lineup; head coach Mauricio Pochettino brought numerous fresh faces to the team, allowing for the debut of eight players young than twenty-years-old. During the four friendly games, teenagers Justin Ellis, Julian Hall, Mathis Albert, and Cavan Sullivan have scored standout goals. On September 26th, the USMNT battled Peru for their first match since the World Cup loss in the round of sixteen to Belgium. Justin Ellis drew first blood in the 4th minute of the match with his debut goal, leading the Americans to 4-1 win against Peru. Their next game took place on September 29th, against Chile, where three yellow cards were given, and the game ended in a brawl with the United States taking a 4-2 win. History was made when seventeen-year-old Mathis Albert scored the final goal in the 93rd minute, making him the youngest goal scorer in USMNT history.

Photo Courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org

Halt the Needless Homework!

- Emmy Sifuentes, Class of 2030

One thing every student complains about weekly is homework. Homework is oftentimes described to students as "a continuation of practicing the topic we learned today at home." However, this is the primary cause of complaint among students: the added workload they have. With the burden bestowed upon us every night, questions begin to arise. Is homework helping us at all? Is it too much? Should we even continue to have it in the first place, or include rigid guidelines for teachers to follow?

A standard year of school contains a minimum of 180 instructional days with seven hours per day. This makes school a full-time job, pushing students past an industry-standard forty-hour work week if you take into account extracurriculars. Adding homework into this situation can easily overwhelm a student. Homework typically lasts between one and two hours each day, but can last even longer depending on how much is assigned. This "extra practice" is said to be helpful, but there are three big questions that need to be considered when reflecting on the role of homework.

The first is what if the student doesn't understand the assignment? At home, they can't reliably contact the teacher, which limits their opportunities should they not fully grasp the content. If students look up videos, sometimes they use different methods or procedures that you haven't been shown yet (oftentimes in mathematics) or provide facts that are unnecessary to your topic (frequently in history classes). Students cannot be expected to simply solve all academic questions in office hours due to other commitments, such as sports, school clubs, or parents needing to get home or pick up siblings. Asking friends won't help either if they also do not understand what the assignment is attempting to convey. Homework ought not to be something that requires teachers to provide an in-depth explanation for, so why do we still receive it when we don't fully understand the expectations or the content?

Secondly, what if the student is consistently stressed about homework? Such unnecessary stress can affect our health in numerous ways. Students can experience anxiety issues that will impact their lives in the long run, struggle with a lack of sleep every night (ruining their overall academic performance), and give up on assignments, leading to the constant use of AI or plagiarism. Simply typing a problem into the AI response engine will give you an answer in a second, and it's exactly what tired and distressed students will look for to complete the work as soon as possible.

This won't cut it in real life; you can't take a picture of your issues all the time and have someone else, nonetheless a robot, do the problem-solving for you. This is exactly what teachers tell us to avoid, but some students are still drawn back into the trap because it's a straightforward solution to an issue that can be confounding to students. Additionally, students may enjoy a particular subject, but homework piling up for the class can remove the joy of learning instilled in them, and their performance in school will decline. With all the anxiety placed on top of that, school will feel

Halt the Needless Homework! contd.

- Emmy Sifuentes, Class of 2030

more like a heavy burden rather than a place to receive and apply knowledge.

Additionally, suppose the student has outside activities. As mentioned before, the student can be participating in outside activities such as sports and school clubs. Being a student-athlete already presents such challenging tasks, with homework being an unnecessary nuisance on top of it. They can run out of time to do homework because of what their lives outside of school call for.

Finally, we are still growing up as students at St. Paul. We are called to try new experiences and create memories with friends that will last a lifetime. We are meant to shape our childhood, not let it be devoured by schoolwork. Sometimes, students need to create memories to pass down and create joy in their lives. They want to improve their social skills and make friends outside of the school setting. We already spend seven hours a day at school, so why is it necessary to weigh us down with these extra hours of work? Why can't we enjoy life outside of learning and become who we are meant to be?

Teachers have made claims that homework benefits our academic success, but in reality, it can only go so far if we continue to get mile-high stacks of homework assignments. If it's extra practice for us, shouldn't we be able to choose how to train our minds to retain information, especially since all students may learn differently from each other? These statements allow us to say that homework should be reduced in an effort to protect the health of students and help them grow at the same time.

Although homework is heavy and shows no signs of leaving just yet, it is still our responsibility to come in prepared for learning. Whether or not we receive homework, we ought to arrive with an open mind, ready to absorb information so homework does not appear as a necessity for teachers to assign extra practice. This is not to say homework should be taken away forever, but it must be reexamined for its perceived need. For example, perhaps an agreement can be made where a classwork assignment, long- term project, or anything you need to correct can qualify as homework, not unseen assignments. This creates balance without argument and provides students with the ability to dive into the task with the teacher's guidance.

Ultimately, the acceptance of homework becomes a social contract. Teachers must recognize that students may have other commitments and want to enjoy their lives; however, students must be aware that it is their responsibility to come to school ready to learn if they want teachers not to consider homework a required labor. Homework must therefore be reduced to maintain the students' love for learning, protect their overall health, and create opportunities for the students to tackle new experiences outside the classroom.

Don't Overlook October: Understanding Awareness

- Anabella Bravo, Class of 2029

In the midst of the fall foliage, every October sees an uptick in pink ribbons and shoelaces. From professional athletes to the students of St. Paul, the pink signifies the importance of awareness as it relates to breast cancer. Breast cancer is currently the most common cancer for women in the United States, with one in eight women being diagnosed in their lifetime. Breast Cancer Awareness Month (BCAM) is to show that cancer is not something we can always prevent or overcome without support. Treatments are more available and do help, but they also do not guarantee full remission and are oftentimes unaffordable for most people.

While some are fortunate enough to pay for treatment through insurance or personal funds, many have to make sacrifices or rely on fundraisers like GoFundMe. Through the National Breast Cancer Foundation, people can donate to help others receive financial assistance for their treatments and overall mental well-being through an impossibly difficult time.

If donating is not feasible, sometimes just being there for someone experiencing the toils of cancer is enough. Being present on the good days, and especially on the bad days, is all we can do at times. Treatments are a very tedious and costly process (not to mention the burden it places on one's well-being); something as simple as making a meal for someone can greatly help their daily life and morale. Even just a simple check-in or words of support can improve someone's day; sometimes that little bit can mean the most for someone going through their most difficult time in life.

Through all of this, it's important to be grateful for what you have and who you have.

If you are struggling or you may know someone struggling, reach out. You are never truly alone in this world, and this October, I hope we all remember that.

Breast Care Helpline: 1-877-465-6636

St. Paul recently had two events for Breast Cancer Awareness month:

- Sidney Galvan '27 and Luna Costello '26 along with their mothers (who have both survived breast cancer), were made honorary flag football captains before a 54-0 victory over Sacred Heart of Jesus on October 5th
- Varsity volleyball sold yummy baked goods during break + lunch this past Thursday to raise money for breast cancer research at City of Hope in Duarte, CA



Sidney '27 and Luna '26 join their mothers as honorary captains

Photo courtesy of the GOAT herself, Ms Rubly

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Fabulous Fat Bear Week!

- Josephine Mancinas, Class of 2029

Fat Bear Week, the annual competition voted on by the public to find the world's fattest bear, just concluded on September 29th. The group of bears competing for the fattest bear title resides at Katmai National Park in Alaska. These bears have been packing on the pounds with salmon as they prepare for hibernation from October through early April. This year's crowned champion is Bear #89, nicknamed "Backpack."

The yearly Alaskan tournament began in 2014 by National Park Service ranger Mike Fitz as a way to interactively engage viewers and educate them on both the brown bears and the rich ecosystem of Katmai National Park. The general public is given the opportunity to watch the bears live on the official Fat Bear Week website at explore.org. Every fall, viewers from across the country tune in to the daily wanderings and bulk season of the Katmai bears.



The competition consists of eleven bears and five bear families that began the season at an average of 750 pounds and end at around 1,000 pounds. This year's crown holder, Backpack, has a heartwarming story. His mother, Holly, is the 2019 victor and introduced Backpack to the Brooks River when he was a first-year cub in 2006. In the following year, the cub came back with a significant leg injury and would climb onto his mother's back when they would go for a dip in the river, earning the nickname "Backpack."

Now he can be recognized as a peaceful fighter because of his lack of territorial aggression towards his competitors. Backpack will stand up for himself when necessary, but this bear prefers to use his stealth for fishing. To identify Backpack on the video stream, you can look for a medium-large-sized bear with blond ears and few visible battle wounds and scars.

Even though Backpack had a tough upbringing with his leg injury as a cub, he was still able to preserve and gain enough weight to receive the crown. Next season's tournament will be entertaining as always, and you can participate in the voting by going to explore.org next fall. Happy Fat Bear Week to all who celebrate and the heartiest of congratulations to Backpack!



Photos Courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org and created by the mad mind of Mr. Nichols

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Faculty Comps

After extensive research and observations (along with never seeing these two people in the same room together), we, the staff of the *Double-Edged Sword*, can no longer remain silent.



Coach Wittmer



Jimbo



Ms. Patino



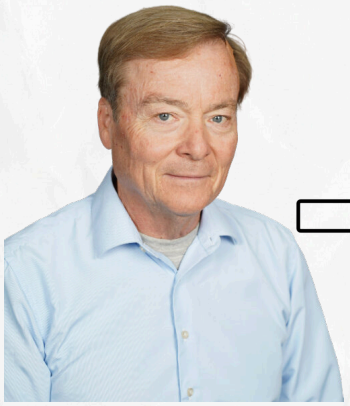
Yzma Post-Potion



Mr. Dixon



Officer Earl



Mr. McNeil



George Washington



Mr. Tingleff



Mr. Peabody



Mr. Chandler



Dr. Nefario

Photos Courtesy of commons.wikimedia.org and stpaulhs.org

***Answers are by faculty/staff last name with the exception of 2 Down**



Across:

3. Coordinates student service trips to the soup kitchen
4. Class of 1964 alumna
6. Class of 1996 alumna
7. New office in the Franciscan Center
12. You'll know him by his meta glasses, but he's also a Steelers fan (yuck!)
14. Recorded 2 goals in a 1/23/15 matchup against BJHS
15. Would SPHS be running without her???
17. Teacher whose undergraduate institution is shutting its doors
19. He will appoint you to the Cabinet if he likes you
20. Throwback pick: Made a Halloween trio along with Mr. Tingleff and Mr. Dixon

Down:

1. Transforms freshmen boys into young men
2. Wears a helmet at pep rallies
5. Don't roam the hallways when he is on the move
8. Recorded a solo tackle against the Notre Dame Knights on a 9/25/15 matchup
9. Matches Ms. Lynch with a pink trader joe's lunch box every day
10. "Go lopes!"
11. ND grad + young Einstein
13. Director of Finance
16. Founded Subway of Santa Fe Springs??
18. PLACE teacher and sneaky hooper
21. Undergrad in Denton

Thank You to Our Staff!

Student Staff Writers:

Anabella Bravo, Class of 2029

Peggysue Ledesma, Class of 2029

Josephine Mancinas, Class of 2029

Annica Mota, Class of 2029

Ariana Murillo, Class of 2030

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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!

Honorable Mention ->



Mr. Lorenzo



Master Splinter

*Disclaimer: Ms. McIntyre seen alive and well in South Bend, IN and might make an appearance in November