

THE EAGLE!



BACK 
TO
ST THOMAS

VOL. 92
ISSUE ONE

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THE EAGLE

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FANS BACK TO THE STANDS

“We’re Back Baby!”

The crowds are large. The stands are packed. And the student section is rowdy. That can only mean one thing ... STH football is back! It has been two years since the roaring chants and powerful sounds of the band have shaken the grounds of Granger Stadium, and what a tremendous impact this exciting environment has on our fighting Eagles as they begin their season with an impressive 4-2 record.

After the Needville game, starting middle linebacker Jack Ward, expressed his experience with having the stands filled again.

“I’ve missed this...” claimed Ward, “nothing is better than hearing the crowd chant your name.”

Ward went on to be named the Texas Private School Defensive Player of the week, finishing the



game with an astonishing 16 tackles, two of them being for a loss, and one pass break up. It is not only Ward who feels this way, as Zach Rocha, Ward’s partnering LB, shared a similar reflection on the return of the fans:

“Having everyone at the games makes me want to play more”, stated Rocha.

At the Catholic Bowl, Rocha led the Eagles with 16 tackles in the tight 38-31 victory against John Paul II. Currently, Rocha is not only leading the Eagles in number of tackles, but is also ranked 3rd overall for tackles in all of TAPPS, Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools, with an outstanding 69 tackles, averaging 11.5 tackles per game.

The STH Eagles are a State Championship program. And as all winners do, they play for the next game. They forget about the results of the previous week and focus on dominating their next opponent. While bearing the bruises and bumps from last week’s game, the players continue to undergo the long practices and draining morning workouts with hopes to be victorious the following Friday. So far, this hard work ethic has paid off as the Eagles began their season 2-0 for the first time in nearly a decade. With the fans back, ready to support, the Eagles now have one more thing to look forward to on game day.

“The players spend hours on end preparing for Friday night’s game,” Coach Davis, defensive coordinator of the Eagles, said. “And the presence of our family, friends, peers, teachers, alumni, and more, sparks a sense of pride when wearing

BY: ANTHONY EQUALE

the red and white.”

Not only is it the presence and energy of the fans that makes the difference on the field but also their coordinated wardrobe that plays a major factor. Each game holds a different theme, and thus far there has been Red Out, Hawaiian Luau, Jersey Night, and Western themes. Without a doubt, these themes bring about a sense of unity in all St. Thomas supporters. From the Eagle Guard, to the parents grilling burgers, all Eagles are brought together by wearing the same outfits and cheering the same chants. This unity not only inspires the Eagles to perform to their best abilities to make the fans proud, but it also serves as a great intimidation factor for the visiting team. Imagine having to walk into a deafening stadium, surrounded by waves of red and white, right after coming off of a long bus ride. As soon as the visitor gets off the bus, they know that they have already lost.

Of course, you can’t forget the mighty STH band. From the thundering sounds of the percussion to the soothing melodies of the woodwinds, the presence of the band brings a heightened intensity to Friday nights, and some may argue that the band be-



comes even more boisterous than the fans. Cameron Price, star wide receiver, fully agrees with this claim as his favorite part of Friday nights is “the drum line’s cadence during kickoffs because it escalates the excitement of the moment.” As of Week 5, with an unbelievable 760 receiving yards, 42 catches, and 6 touchdowns, Price holds the number 1 spot in TAPPS for receiving yards and the number 3 spot in all of Texas High School Football.

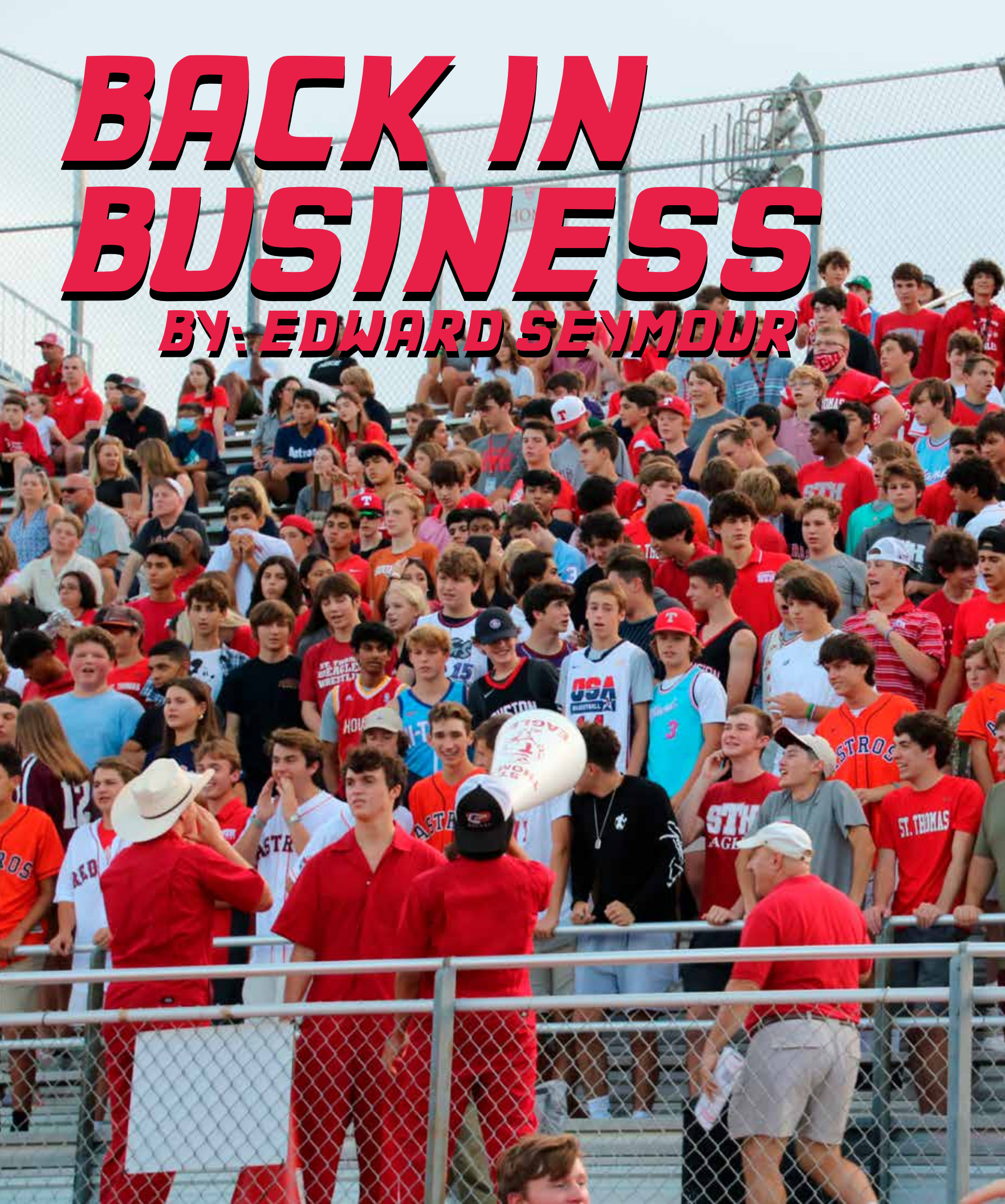
“The fans bring an entirely different source of energy and passion to the game,” states Price, “I live for the wild cheers of the fans because without them, the game wouldn’t be the same.”

Having fans fill the stands again greatly impacts the production of the St. Thomas football team, and this is evident through their great start to the season. With the continued support from the fans, families, and alumni ... who knows, the Eagles may be on the path to another Championship season.



BACK IN BUSINESS

BY EDWARD SEYMOUR



Football has always been at the heart of St. Thomas, however, due to Covid last year the student section was completely empty. This year St. Thomas has more students than ever and as we exit the pandemic the student section is now loud and lively, as it should be. We are returning strong this year, with the first games stands overflowing with roaring students. Senior Colin Little has been waiting for this day to come, just as many of us have.

"It was just different last year, we didn't have many opportunities to go to sports games until the end of the year really," says Colin after our first win against Needville. Personally, I have been waiting for this day too. The last game I went to was socially distanced and really was not the experience I was hoping for, it was very dull and just not the same. This year reminded me what it felt like to be part of the crowd, the brotherhood, yelling at the other team and chanting for ours. One big part of our student spirit is fueled by our Eagle Guard, whose members had a difficult time last year due to all the restrictions and low turnouts.

Now, they've returned, and they're better than ever. The most recent member, Nick Gentile, who went from one of our loudest students in the stands to finally getting a position in the Eagle Guard, says,

"I love the games, it's where I feel involved with the STH brotherhood the most!"

Nick worked hard to become a member of the Eagle Guard and was able to support our Eagles at Kinkaid when the number one rated team escaped by a single touchdown that was allowed by a bad call from the refs. Although we barely lost this big game, the Eagle Guard and student body will always be there to support our Eagles wherever this season takes them.



ARE WE BACK TO NORMAL?



BY: ROBERT LONGO

For the first time in St. Thomas history, the senior class is the only class to have already experienced a regular year of high school... right? While COVID-19 has certainly turned St. Thomas on its head, it is important to remember that every class at St. Thomas has had their own obstacles that defined their meaning of 'normal'. For instance, the most recent graduating class, the class of '21, had a plethora of challenges and crises that they overcame before graduation. While the class of '21 persevered through a restricted senior year, COVID-19 was simply the last hurdle of a chain of obstacles. Beyond COVID-19, the class

of '21 faced school cancellations from multiple hurricanes. When asked about all of the difficulties that his class faced, Tanner Erb ('21) said, "My high school experience was full of trials, ranging from rain and ice to a global pandemic. However, through these struggles, me and my class were able to grow and truly understand the value of life. Although the disasters were horrible as they came, we learned how to adapt to problems quickly, which is a skill that is vital for life after high school!" Even though the class of '22 still faces COVID-19 disrupting their high school experience, according to senior Nico Lopez ('22), not even



COVID-19 can prevent him from enjoying his senior year. "What makes St. Thomas enjoyable is being able to spend time with my friends, and COVID-19 has not stopped me from creating quality memories on the sports fields, in the classrooms, and outside of school with my eagle brothers. While COVID-19 was originally difficult to cope with and overcome, the biggest obstacle to enjoying my high school experience is my own desire to get involved," said Lopez.

Yet, despite every effort to make things seem regular, St. Thomas students are faced with the continual reminder that things are not the way they used to be. Whether it is masks, social distancing procedures, or the safety of their loved ones, it is likely that the stigma and uncanny feeling that a COVID-19 world creates will not subside for a long time. Although this year is much more back to standard operating procedure compared to last year, there are many things that prevent this year from being the regular old St. Thomas that the senior class knew. While this year brought the return of the orientation dances and Camp Aquinas, it is still a recovery year of sorts, with both the freshman and sophomore classes experiencing much of St. Thomas life for the first time. While it is sad to think about how much high school that the sophomore, junior, and senior classes have lost, St. Thomas students have taken this year as a golden opportunity to take advantage of what St. Thomas has provided in the face of an ongoing pandemic. Although the class of '21 left big shoes to fill, it is heartening to see the class of '22 pick up the torch in leading the school to multi-year high in participation in clubs, sports, and student activities.

Even though I am a senior, I still have not had a 'normal' year at St. Thomas because I transferred into St. Thomas my sophomore year. Beyond missing out on an entire year of St. Thomas life, COVID-19 disrupted two rugby seasons, my plans to attend a mission trip, my ability to socialize with my Eagle Brothers, and much more. Throughout the early part of my high school, the thing that I wanted most was a 'normal' high school experience, yet I missed out on so many experiences by waiting for things to take care of themselves. Unfortunately, it took me a couple too many years and global pandemics to realize that if you really want something, you just have to make it happen, whether it be the grade, a spot on



a sports team, or memories with the people around you. Fortunately for the freshman, sophomores, and juniors, you still have most of your high school ahead of you, and what better time to enjoy high school than when things are opening back up. Unlike the seniors last year, we had Fish Week, Camp Aquinas, and Pep Rallies, so what are you waiting for? Join another club, hit the gym, study harder... sign up for rugby! If you have the opportunity to get out—take it, because you may not get a second chance.

THE TRANSFER EXPERIENCE

BY: BRIAN LIVELY



One of the best parts of transferring is the excitement of seeing Mary Moody in action, with all the games and fun.

“It’s definitely more welcoming,” Robert Longo ‘22 responded when asked about the transfer environment, “it’s something I was more used to personally having gone to Catholic school for most of my life”. Robert transferred sophomore year from St. John’s, and he describes all the opportunities St. Thomas offers for students to bond as a class. Jake Wright ‘22, who transferred this year from St. Mary’s in Pittsburgh, Kansas, concurred about the welcoming environment and the social ease of the school.

Cameron Price ‘22 transferred from Concordia Lutheran in Tomball his sophomore year. “I felt like there was a lot less pressure on you coming to school every day” Cameron Price said when asked about the social environment. He continued by describing the strong sense of brotherhood and community provided at St. Thomas.

Personally, having transferred from the bubble world that is California, I was able to meet my classmates the moment I stepped on campus for the first football practice during the summer. Even in the

peak of the pandemic, I immediately knew a sizable portion of my class simply by going to practices. While the sophomore retreat was not possible, its absence did not hinder my social interaction.

Despite the welcoming scene, transferring has not been without its difficulties. “Even though I’m used to academic rigor, coming from St. John’s, it was a difficult transition over to the St. Thomas system in the way classes were set up, homework was given out. You know, I didn’t know about the LAPs until the second week of school” Longo said.

I agreed, as the significance of the LAPs is not stressed nearly enough at new-student orientations. Longo and I both experienced not knowing when tests or quizzes were going to be simply due to the structure of the portal. The difference between the transfer schools is not in the portal system, that remains the same. The true contrast is in the use. The other schools post assignments on the portal, while new students have to learn that you have to use the portal to go to other places to find your assignments.

It seemed to be a scavenger hunt just to find the homework. “When I went into sophomore year, I’m like ‘Wow! I only have two assignments due this week’ just to get blindsided by extra work due that day” Robert remarked. Transfer students, regardless of what they experienced at previous schools, have to realize truly what courses involve as soon as they begin school. Cameron Price addresses the importance of time-management and being aware of what you need to complete: “You’ve got to get your stuff done and you’ve got to get it done on time”.

Luckily, the LAPs are now discussed in the orientations, even from two years ago when Longo transferred. This is partly due to former transfers guiding the new ones as the people providing the information during these meetings. That being said, it seemed silly to have the LAPs as opposed to the Assignment Center and the scavenger hunt for homework. Furthermore, although the LAPs make sense in the grand scheme of things, the true scope of these documents need to be stressed better.

Overall, all transfers have had a good time at St. Thomas, thanks especially to the social ease in the welcoming environment presented to new students. The true challenge is not in the rigor of the content, but in the sheer workload and even finding the assignments. However, after a couple weeks, new students get used to the norms, begin to learn time management, and truly get into the rhythm as a student.



Brian Lively ‘23



Robert Longo ‘22



Cameron Price ‘22



Jake Wright ‘22

All of these transfers have found extracurricular passions.

OFF-CAMPUS LUNCH

BY: ARJUN CHAHAL



Off-campus lunch is something of a sacred tradition here at St. Thomas High School.

When the lunch bell rings, seniors excitedly rush to their cars and hit the road with a plethora of possibilities of places to eat. Uberrito, Buffalo Wild Wings, Piatta, El Rey, Smoothie King, Jack's Grill, and more immediately come to mind. What if this tradition would never happen again?

This is the question that seniors face this year as they have not yet received this coveted privilege and have no confirmation it will ever happen again. There are many rumors about why this is happening, but the aim here is to get to the bottom of it through interviews with both the Student Body President and the Dean of Students.



Many students believe that it is because of bad behavior from certain members of a prior senior class that they are being punished and not given the privilege of off-campus lunch "It has nothing to do with conduct, up until now, the seniors have been great" Rodney Takacs, Dean of Students said almost apologetically, knowing how important this tradition is for seniors.

He claims that the reason off-campus lunch will not return in the foreseeable future is due to the safety of the students. "We have known of cases when unfortunate things have happened when a student was out on off-campus lunch and we came to the conclusion that the best policy going forward for St. Thomas would be to revoke off-campus lunch" Takacs said.

As a consolation, St. Thomas has made improvements to the Joe O'Brien Grove for the seniors to enjoy their lunch. Games and extra seating, provide seniors with a separate area away from the normal lunch spaces of the rest of the school.



"I think it is a great privilege and as a senior class I think we have deserved it, but we can not do off-campus lunch anymore because the school would be liable if any accident were to occur" Wyatt Green, Student Body President '22 said in response to the question of off-campus lunch.

While the current situation cannot be reverted to the normal off-campus lunch, Green has a brilliant solution to mend the situation. "We hope to supplement this situation by allowing seniors to use Uber Eats, Postmates, and other food delivery services to order food to school," Green said.

While off-campus lunch will not be coming back any time soon, seniors can look forward to improvements being made to the situation to ensure that seniors have the best lunch experience possible. Off-Campus lunch may be at its sunset, but seniors look to new horizons through new privileges to make sure that senior tradition lives on.

BACK TO CAMP AQUINAS

BY: LUKE EVANS



“Why can’t I just be thrown into high school like my brother was?” I can distinctly remember telling myself this in the weeks leading up to the start of my freshman year, as I discovered that I would be going to a camp for five days before even taking a class at St. Thomas. I did not want to be treated like a little kid, have to do team building exercises, or do anything that my brother did not have to do when he was a freshman, a sentiment that I am sure has been shared throughout the freshman classes who have attended Camp Aquinas. At the time it seemed like a waste of time and to me, it signified that St. Thomas’s culture would not be the same as it was when I had shadowed and watched my brother go through high school. However, as a member of the first St. Thomas class to have attended Camp Aquinas as freshmen and had the opportunity to be Senior Leaders, I have a newfound appreciation

for Camp Aquinas and how much it has helped not only me, but also hundreds of other men of St. Thomas become truly immersed in the St. Thomas brotherhood.

Going into high school, I was the only kid from my middle school to decide to go to St. Thomas as I lived in the Woodlands. I was able to recognize a couple of kids from summer programs and baseball camps, but other than that I knew absolutely no one. When I first arrived at Camp Aquinas, the senior leaders introduced themselves, then had us introduce ourselves to each other. These were the guys who I would be spending the next five days or so getting to know and bonding with, but also the people who I would be spending the next four years with as well. We played basketball, did the ropes course, and even built a boat out of cardboard together. These competitions and activities truly allowed me to make connections with

my fellow classmates, and gave each person a chance to display their unique skill sets and show how they were able to help our house as we tried to win the House Cup.

One of the clearest examples of this that I was able to witness this year as a Senior Leader was the bus pull, which required the entire house to work as a team to pull a full-sized school bus one hundred yards. There was a catch though, for every camper who was taken off of the rope and put onto the bus, a second would come off of the time that it took for us to pull the bus across the finish line. This required the freshmen to work together in order to find the best combination of bus pullers and bus riders. They were able to find a great balance and ended up pulling the bus in under twenty seconds, with ten people sitting on the bus.



Becoming a Senior Leader truly allowed me to see the impact that bonding over Camp Aquinas has had in my own high school experience, as many of the friendships that I have today were formed at Camp Aquinas.
-Luke Evans ('22)

When I was a freshman at Camp Aquinas, I never thought that doing the ropes course, playing basketball, or messing around in the cabin with my future classmates would set a solid foundation for our relationships over the next four years at St. Thomas. However, as I look back, it is clear that developing these moments at

camp from over three years ago have brought the small STH class of '22 incredibly close. I am sure that the freshman and sophomore classes from this year will also look back at their time at camp and recognize just how important of a time it was for their class. Seeing the freshmen, and even the sophomores who

were unable to experience this last year, come together at Camp Aquinas week this year truly gave me a new perspective on Camp Aquinas. I no longer think of it as some cringey waste of time, but a place where students from all over the city of Houston can come together and bond over the things that they love to do. Many of the friendships that I have at St. Thomas originated at Camp Aquinas, and some of the best advice that I have received in regards to high school came from my Senior Leaders, whose names I can still remember. Whether it's on the basketball court or playing a game of chess to earn house points, Camp Aquinas has become a tradition at St. Thomas where STH Eagles can truly form relationships that will last a lifetime.



JUNIOR AQUINAS WEEK

BY: CALEB DAVIS

Since 2018, every new school year at St. Thomas begins with Aquinas Week, which is a weeks-worth of games, activities, and college visits held at St. Thomas and Camp Aquinas. Aquinas Week is a great way for the students at St. Thomas to spend some time with each other outside of the classroom to bond and grow relationships with one another. During Aquinas Week, most of the student body goes to Camp Aquinas to have fun, compete, and meet new people. The rest of the students stay on campus to participate in various activities that the school organizes.

This year, most of the senior class, along with the entire freshman

and sophomore class, spent Aquinas Week at Camp Aquinas, while the junior class remained on campus engaging in college tours, museum visits, and a day of unique classes to teach students new things outside of the common subjects. Although junior Aquinas Week was successful, I believe that St. Thomas can introduce new, different activities that could make the week more exciting, help students strengthen their relationships with their classmates, and prepare them for our future.

The first major change concerns the day where students engaged in classes like bookbinding, paper rocket building, and letter writing. Instead of offering these

classes, St. Thomas should offer a practice ACT, similar to how they offer a practice SAT in October.

“While the activities that the junior class participated in on the first day of Aquinas Week were constructive, a practice ACT would be very valuable for our students in their preparation for college,” said Ms. Dunford, a college counselor at St. Thomas.

Giving a practice ACT to the junior class would give them much-needed practice for the real test, show them what they need to improve on, and inform them on whether they think the SAT or ACT is the most optimal test for them.



On the following day, students participated in service projects and college tours. Many juniors thoroughly enjoyed helping out in the community and touring prestigious universities. The only suggestion they had was to offer more college visit opportunities, as not every student received the chance to tour.

“These visits are an invaluable experience because it helps us decide where we will spend the next chapter of our lives,” junior Anthony Equale said, “I just wish they could have been offered to more students.”

Many others echoed the same message, as they all want to make the most informed decision on which university they will attend in the near future.

On the final two days of Aquinas Week, juniors visited Space Center Houston and the Holocaust Museum. Even though students found these trips interesting and informative, they truly believe that team-building activities and competitions like what they experienced during their freshman year of Aquinas Week would be more worthwhile. When interviewing the junior class about what

activities they would like to see in next year's junior Aquinas Week, many suggested house tournaments and competitions.

“A house tournament for the junior class rather than trips to various museums would boost house spirit, prevent busing fees, and strengthen the bonds of friendship with my classmates,” said juniors Max Dagley and Oni Mouton.

In fact, an overwhelming majority of the junior class agreed that they would most like to see a house tournament in next year's junior Aquinas Week.



“It is absolutely something we could try next year, the bonds that could be formed through a class tournament would be a great way for the juniors to kick off the school year,” said House System Coordinator Dr. Green when asked about the idea of a house tournament.

Aquinas Week is a truly phenomenal and unique experience that no other school in Houston offers. It is something to look forward to as summer dwindles to a close and it can become even greater if it incorporates some ideas from the students into the schedule.

REDEFINING A RIVALRY

BY: MITCH ONUFROW



The three most competitive sports we face Strake in are rugby, ultimate Frisbee, and chess. The best way to keep the similar kind of rivalry we had in football is obviously with rugby, and not only because of the big hits. St. Thomas' ultimate Frisbee team is so much better than Strake's that it leaves spectators feeling more disappointed in Strake than they are proud of STH. Chess is a serious place of rivalry for us because in order to become state champions in chess we have to go through Strake. However, it is hard to imagine the entire student body cheering as much for a beautifully calculated checkmate as they would for a hard earned touchdown.

Meanwhile, rugby delivers everything you need for a greater than great rivalry. It delivers the same contact and big hits, the same level of strategy at a faster pace, the same opportunity for a spirited crowd, and adds an all new aspect of underlying respect- something that should not be missing from students of a great school, even in rivalry.

The competitiveness of these rugby games is also that of a great rivalry, with STH on the path to victory. Our last game against Strake should have been a tie, if it was not for a disallowed score in the nail biting, final moments of the game. Strake is also currently rated as one of the best rugby teams in the country. In order to win state, we have to go through Strake.



To top it all off there is a good relationship between the athletes of both teams, very similar to the good relationships between many students of the two schools. Since rugby is such a small sport in Texas, a lot of the players know each other. Some have even played rugby together in middle school or on club teams. A lot of the players from both teams are friends. And if attempting to beat the life out of your opponent shortly before eating and talking at the same table with them isn't fit to redefine a rivalry, I can't imagine what is. So next time your Eagles are battling against Strake, go cheer them on, because whether our rivalry is in football, rugby, chess, or even living on only through the students themselves, we can rely on one fact:

EAGLE FIGHT NEVER DIES!



GETTING BACK INTO THE SWING OF THINGS WITH COLIN LITTLE

BY: MARK CHEEK



Left: Little contemplates the green, determining the perfect angle and power for his putt.

Lower Left: Thomas Roberson sets his stance for his first hits of the day.

Right: Little takes his putt, placing the ball within millimeters of his target.

Lower Right: Little takes a breather, stretching out after a hard drive.



Golf has been a great resource for Colin throughout his time as St. Thomas, “It’s fun to hang out with the golf team and travel all over Texas with them, competing against other schools,” Colin Little said. With golf, consistency is very important and challenging, so getting to a competitive level can be very frustrating and disheartening at first. But Little stuck it out and

learned to persevere, rising to the top of the team. “Golf has taught me some critical values needed to succeed in school and life,” Little said. He has taken the skills he learned on the grass to the classroom and has excelled not only as an athlete but also as a scholar.

The team is holding tryouts soon and would love to have more eagles come out and show what

they’re worth, settling all the Top Golf trash talk once and for all. Golf is one of the easiest (not cheapest) sports to get into that St. Thomas has to offer. All you have to do is show up and the team will welcome you in, eager to prove their worth by showing you what to do.

Colin Little is returning to the green as the St. Thomas golf team captain, hoping to lead the team to a state title in his fourth year on varsity. The St. Thomas Golf Team has a long history of success, winning their first state title in 1961 and 13 titles after that. The boys are looking to add one more title to that list this year. Winning in 2022 will be a big task, but that does not bother Little.

He has progressed drastically over the last three years with the golf team. Refining his craft,



developing consistency, and becoming a leader to build the team around. Little’s main goal in the off-season this year has been to improve his consistency, staying in the ‘70s, for reference par for 18 holes is 72, and pro golfers typically score around 68. At practice Little fosters a strong positive team attitude which drives the boys to work harder and hit farther.

St. Thomas takes the saying “keep your friends close and your enemies closer” very seriously, practicing right alongside Lamar at the driving range. This creates an interesting dynamic because during the week the two teams are amiable, but when competition comes, the laughing stops and the competition runs high.

The team did not have much to recover from last year after covid since they practice exclusively outside and off-campus, but they are looking forward to a normal season with healthy competition that they did not have last year.



BACK IN SEASON

BY RUBEN VARA



Varsity Returners

- Bruno Castilla
- Evan Crosswait
- Andrew Cantoni
- Ben Garcia
- Jack Olhenburg
- Blake Keller
- Santiago Labarthe
- Nico Lopez
- Andre Meza
- Thomas Pham
- Blake Keller
- Ruben Vara
- Jacob Wood

St. Thomas Soccer is back in season! With a grand total of thirteen returning varsity players, the potential for the program is at an all time high. Out of the thirteen returners, eight are seniors, who will be fighting for their last shot at a state championship.

The preparations for the Class of 2022's final shot at claiming the title has started early this year. With tryouts being held a month earlier than in previous years, the team will have more time to get in shape, build chemistry, and make adjustments as needed.

In the 2020-2021 season, this extra time may have been just what the team needed. It was a rough start for the Eagles, trying to find their

rhythm with only a handful of returning starters. The graduation of the Class of 2020 resulted in major losses for St Thomas soccer. A number of graduates such as David Steffes ('20), Alex Rivero ('20), and Robert Vara ('20) were key elements of the game plan for St Thomas. David is described by his teammates as "an animal" in the midfield, Alex as "untouchable" in the attack, and Robert as "a lifesaver" in goal. Each of these players have earned their respect in high school soccer being recognized for a number of honors such as 1st Team All-State, MVP, Offensive Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year, and the list goes on.



STH SOCCER

Despite the skills and hard work of players however, the St Thomas soccer team has not secured the State Championship title since the year 1981.

The Eagles have come so tremendously close to obtaining the title in recent years, and it hurts that much more each time for the players, families, and coaches. This year, the Eagles are determined to put an end to the metaphorical tasting of the State Champions title. They are determined to win it all by any means necessary. "Having been so close for so long, I think the mentality is do whatever it takes," Head Coach, Kenny Martin, said.

The coaching staff is confident that if this group of guys commits to the "do whatever it takes" mentality, they will find success on the field. With a solid foundation of returning varsity players, Coach Martin is setting goals early and formulating a plan for the team's success.

"The goal is first and foremost to retake what is ours, the #1 spot in district. After that, the obvious is that we want to bring a state title home and I think that is very doable with this group of guys. The key this season is going to be

how quickly we can mesh the new guys with the returners and there should be plenty of time to do that," Coach Martin said.

A couple of the new additions to the team that Coach Martin speaks of include Mambo Tello ('24) and Nguyen Nguyen ('22). Mambo joins the St Thomas program as a first year student, while Nguyen reunites with the program for the first time since his freshman year. Both players will be key elements of the attack for St Thomas, as four year letterman, Pablo Tager ('21), has left the Eagles to continue his academic and athletic career at the University of San Diego.

"I think we are going to see some faster and more attacking soccer," said Coach Martin.

With the new additions to the team, the solid group of returning players, and an early start to the season, the St Thomas soccer program has lots of potential this year. This will be the Class of 2022's last shot at claiming their title as the TAPPS 6A Division 1 State Champions and they are going to do whatever it takes to get there. Eagle fight never dies!

2021-2022 SEASON SCHEDULE

NOV. 11	HOUSTON CHRISTIAN (H) 7:30	JAN. 6	CASTLEBERRY KICKOFF (A)
NOV. 16	JOHN COOPER (A) 7:00	JAN. 7	CASTLEBERRY KICKOFF (A)
NOV. 18	KINKAID (H) 7:00	JAN. 8	CASTLEBERRY KICKOFF (A)
NOV. 19	CONCORDIA SHOWCASE (A)	JAN. 14	FT. BEND BUSH (H) 7:00
NOV. 20	CONCORDIA SHOWCASE (A)	JAN. 18	ST. PIUS X (H) 7:00 *
NOV. 30	AWTY INTERNATIONAL (A) 7:00	JAN. 21	CONCORDIA LUTHERAN (A) 7:00 *
DEC. 2	ST. THOMAS SHOWCASE (H)	JAN. 25	VILLAGE SCHOOL (A) 6:30 *
DEC. 3	ST. THOMAS SHOWCASE (H)	JAN. 28	ST. JOHN XXIII (H) 7:00 *
DEC. 4	ST. THOMAS SHOWCASE (H)	FEB. 1	BEAUMONT KELLY (H) 7:00 *
DEC. 10	CYPRESS CHRISTIAN (H) 7:00	FEB. 4	ST. PIUS X (A) 7:00 *
DEC. 16	KATY WESTPARK HS (H) 7:00	FEB. 11	CONCORDIA LUTHERAN (H) 7:00 *
DEC. 28	SHARPSTOWN (H) 2:00	FEB. 13	VILLAGE SCHOOL (H) 7:00 *
DEC. 30	BARBERS HILL (A) 6:00	FEB. 15	ST. JOHN XXIII (A) 7:00 *
		FEB. 18	BEAUMONT KELLY (A) 7:00 *

* TAPPS DISTRICT 3-6A CONTEST
PLAYOFF DATES AND TIMES TBD

the PRICE

IS RIGHT

by Robert Longo

Although Camp Aquinas and Fish Week are many St. Thomas student's first impression of the school, some people have unique roads to becoming St. Thomas Students. One of these students is Cameron Price ('22), who transferred into St. Thomas half-way through last year.

Price's journey to the Eagle Brotherhood arguably started all the way back in kindergarten, when he first started playing football. Football has always been a central part of Price's life, and his hard work and love for the sport has played a significant role in guiding him through life. Shortly after starting his kindergarten football season, Price fractured his spine, and had to stop playing football for a couple of years. Price's love for the sport continued to rise during the time, and Price finally returned to football in the fourth grade. Unfortunately, Price continually experienced back issues all the way until eighth grade, and even had to wear a back brace for a significant period of time. Despite all of that, Price kept working, and his strength and athleticism only continued to increase entering his first year of high school football.

Although Price was finally pumped to be able to live out the 'Friday night lights' and compete in a competitive high school football league at Cy Fair High School, Price did not feel like he was in the best role for his team. Although Price plays slot receiver, an extremely important position, he was not fully utilized by the team, which gave its running back most of the opportunities.

In order to get more field time and further develop his art, Price transferred to Concordia Lutheran for his sophomore year. At Concordia, Price was finally able to play real high school football, and put on a show throughout the season. After continually putting on impressive performances, people began to take notice, especially St. Thomas' Maddox Kopp ('21). After the St. Thomas-Concordia football game, Kopp reached out to Price via Instagram DM. The two talked for a while before Kopp eventually convinced Price to shadow him for a day at St. Thomas.

When Price shadowed St. Thomas, he was very impressed by the school: the school had outstanding facilities, a great weight room, and family-like community. After only a few hours on campus, he was sold.

Price transferred to St. Thomas midway through his sophomore year, and quickly became tight with his new set of friends. Price says that football has always been such a big part of his life because it is more than a sport: football is something that can be shared with other people and bonded over. He thinks that if it weren't for football, it would not have been so easy to find a great group of friends that he will keep for the rest of his life.

Price has never had a greater love for football than during his junior football season. He had high expectations for himself going into the season, as it was finally the chance for his hard work to pay off, and win with a team that he considered family.

One of Price's most memorable moments from his junior football season is the St. Thomas-Central Catholic football game. According to Price, the football team came on very overconfident, and underestimated what it would take to win the football game. After having a super cold first half, being down 0-14, the team had to mentally reset. During half time, Kopp, Price, and all of the other receivers talked out the first half, created a plan, and locked in for the second half. Eventually, they realized that all they had to do is relax, and play some football. In the second half, St. Thomas came out hot, putting up about fifty points, absolutely blowing out Central Catholic.

Price's life as a St. Thomas student now extends far beyond football. Price is a two-sport athlete, competing on the St. Thomas track team, and is also on the St. Thomas honor roll. After previously attending two other high schools, Price does not take St. Thomas for granted. St. Thomas is everything he dreamed about in high school, and it has all the amenities he could ever want: a nice welcoming campus with a student center, much more freedom than a public school, brand new athletic and academic equipment (as opposed to the old 1999 equipment that Cy Fair had), as well as a tight brotherhood that he has not seen anywhere else. As opposed to public schools, where fights between students were a frequent occurrence, Price feels like he is friendly with everyone he knows at St. Thomas.

St. Thomas students come from every walk of life: some students are hard-focused on academics, while some students live in the weight room. Some students walk to school, and like Price, some students drive forty-five minutes or more to school every day. Regardless, Cameron Price is just one example of how anyone can find their place at St. Thomas as long as they are genuine and work hard at what they love.



HITTING CLOSE TO HOME

BY: **ETHAN
VINSON**



It is that time of year for seniors to start applying for college. Here at St. Thomas there are seniors that have a wide variety of college location preferences. Some prefer to stay in state while others prefer moving away. I surveyed the entire senior class to get a better understanding of where exactly everyone wants to go to college; and whether or not cost, location, family etc. plays a factor into their decision.

All the seniors who took the survey did so anonymously. I did not interview any seniors personally in order to protect their identity for a potentially sensitive topic. The first question I asked the seniors was if they preferred their college location to be in state or out of state. I also gave them the option to say that the location did not matter and that academics were most important in their decision. That option was the most popular choice taking 42.4% of the votes. The next most popular choice was in state with 36.4% of the votes, followed by out of state with 21.2% of the votes. After this question I asked the seniors to elaborate on their choice. The majority of the students that said they did not care about location said that academics were most important. They stated that while going out of state would be a fun experience, academics and campus comfort are most important no matter the location. The students that said they preferred staying in Texas did so because they either wanted to stay

close to family or just see no reason to go elsewhere. The seniors that want to go out of state had specific reasons. They either wanted to get away from family or want to study a specific subject that has better programs out of state. For example, there is a student that wants to work in finance in the future.

“Many schools in the Northeast will give me the opportunity to be successful” one senior said.

The largest factor for why some students prefer state college is because of cost. Out of state college costs are rapidly increasing and some of those prices are far too high for even most middle class families. Staying in state for college would not only be three quarters smaller in cost, but also closer to family. Some students want to stay closer to their families because it is familiar and they feel there is no large reason to leave the state. Because Texas is so large simply moving from Houston to Dallas for college is a massive culture shock in of itself. The most important thing is that the seniors enjoy college and receive a great education wherever they go. Whether they choose to stay in state or out of state is up to them and their families, but when making that decision they will always remember there's no place like home.

LUCA (2021) REVIEW

BY: BRIAN LIVELY

Luca (2021) is a new Disney-animated film that follows aquatic creatures, called “sea monsters”, by the human village, in Italy. Luca Pugaro, a sea-monster protagonist, starts as in a quiet underwater farming town, living with his mom, dad, and grandparents. His parents are strict and do not allow him to explore the world. However, life changes when Luca discovers lost human objects near his home, sparking his intrigue. He meets another boy, Alberto, who shows that sea monsters can turn into humans when they are not touching water. Luca is amazed by the sophistication of human inventions, but the poster of a “Vespa” catches his eye. Alberto and Luca go into town, and while looking for a Vespa they encounter a young girl named Giulia. Vespa is expensive, so they enter the local Porterosso Cup to win money. Before this, Luca’s mom specifically told Luca never to go near the surface. When he disobeys, his parents go to the human village to look for him.

The setting of the movie is breathtaking, to say the least. Disney is the opposite of bankrupt, and the 38 million dollar budget for animation goes quite far. With the latest animation technology, Disney makes the Italian village and underwater scenes seem simultaneously both real and surreal with a touch of quaintness. The scenery is

detailed, and the objects included in the shot always belong. In other words, there are no random items. They fit the time frame and the context of the scenes. “I like the beauty of the shadows cast by the objects” Nico Barriga ‘23 said.

The symbolism in Luca, and the greater overall message, is pretty easy to identify and



understand. This is probably because the show was made for young children. Luca feels trapped in his small town life, so he sees the “Vespa” as a way to explore the grand world that he knows nothing about. The stories he has been told his whole life are mostly false. This overall message

this movie is trying to send is that you can not know for sure what is true about the world unless you experience it yourself. The Vespa is a symbol for freedom. The concept of an object symbolizing a greater idea is common, but it served the purpose well in Luca. “It is very wholesome and teaches you about Italian culture” Tristian Esquivel ‘22 remarked.

Luca seems to stay true to the Italian culture it is supposed to represent. That being said, it does contain many cliches of Italian culture, mainly because the movie is designed for young kids who expect these cliches from an Italian movie. For example, the only food Luca really eats in the village is spaghetti. This is an Italian cliché. They really do eat spaghetti in Italy, but the audience never sees Luca eat typical American foods like a hamburger. Regardless of one’s opinions on stereotypes, it is generally a good thing to portray the local culture of the place a movie takes place. “My wife is Sicilian, and we’ve been to Italy several times. We really enjoyed the movie, and it makes us want to go back to Sorrento” Mr. Dan Green said.

In all, Luca is a solid Disney fantasy film with consistently vibrant settings and Italian stereotypes, along with typical Disney symbolism for greater-than-self

LUCA

PG 2021, Animation/Comedy, 1h 40m



91%

TOMATOMETER
281 Reviews



87%

AUDIENCE SCORE
1,000+ Ratings

Rotten Tomatoes Rating of Luca (2021)

messages. This movie is perfect for anyone under the age of 8, anyone who likes sea monsters, or even anyone who likes spaghetti, but it still has an appeal to all people. It is refreshing to have some new content by Disney that is not a reboot (think live-action Lion King), and this information seems actually accurate about the Italian culture being portrayed (as opposed to Pocahontas). Disney’s money magic continues to charm on.



Photo from a movie advertisement

SHANG-CHI AND THE LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS: MOVIE REVIEW

BY ARJUN CHAHAL



Last week, Marvel fans went to theaters excited and anticipating a good show of Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings. The movie is already being seen as a success with a 94 million dollar debut in the Labor Day Box Office. The movie also boasts a spectacular 92% rotten tomatoes rating and a 98% audience score. Ignoring the numbers, Shang-Chi is a breathtaking movie because of its timeline, and display of Asian culture. "Another year, another Marvel movie, and it's great every time!" said Anthony Equale '23.

The timeline of Shang-Chi is a part of phase four of the MCU (Marvel Cinematic Universe) All Marvel movies follow a timeline, making these movies so unique. Even if one does not want to watch Shang-Chi because of the superhero story, every devoted Marvel fan watches the movie because it continues the MCU plot. "A must watch for all Marvel fans," said student Will Pilibosian '23.



SHANG-CHI AND THE LEGEND OF THE TEN RINGS

PG-13 | 2021, Action/Fantasy, 2h 13m



92%

TOMATOMETER
303 Reviews



98%

AUDIENCE SCORE
10,000+ Verified Ratings

The cultural aspects of Shang-Chi are breathtaking. Just as the hit success Black Panther introduced an African influence into the Marvel Universe, Shang-Chi introduced the Asian cultural background into Marvel. Asian tradition and art is on full display through architecture, weapons, martial arts, and language used throughout the movie. In fact, about a third of the movie is in Mandarin. "Shang-Chi is a refreshing cultural change to the MCU," said Harrison Watts '23.



Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings is a must watch for all movie lovers. The timeline in the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and the display of Asian culture all contribute to the success of this groundbreaking movie. "Marvel keeps finding a way to revive the horse that is beaten every time a superhero movie is made," said Pilibosian '23.

TOD HOT TO HANDLE HOWDY CHICKEN REVIEW

BY: ETHAN VINSON



On the warm day of September 18th, I anticipated a new sensation of flavors to be discovered. A new restaurant had just opened up on Shepherd and it advertised fresh hot chicken. Knowing that those two words in the same sentence usually create a delicious outcome I knew I had to try it. The restaurant's name is Howdy Chicken. A simplistic menu with different levels of heat to choose from creates an intriguing new potential franchise waiting to be adored by many. Howdy Chicken has three locations and all are currently in Houston. Each location is fairly small due to the style of business. Howdy has a walk up counter to order the food, and a small dining area to eat inside. However the majority of Howdy's business is from take out orders.

The layout of the restaurant was simplistic and modern. Nice white tile paired with simplistic logo artwork made for an inviting and fresh atmosphere. While the artistic elements of the dining room were pleasant, the cleanliness was not. As I entered the restaurant I noticed that a child had recently delved into the art of throwing his meal on the ground. The floor around his table was littered with pieces of chicken and waffle fries that had met a less than desirable fate. This mess was not cleaned up at any point during my meal, and as a result made me feel a little queasy at times. Other

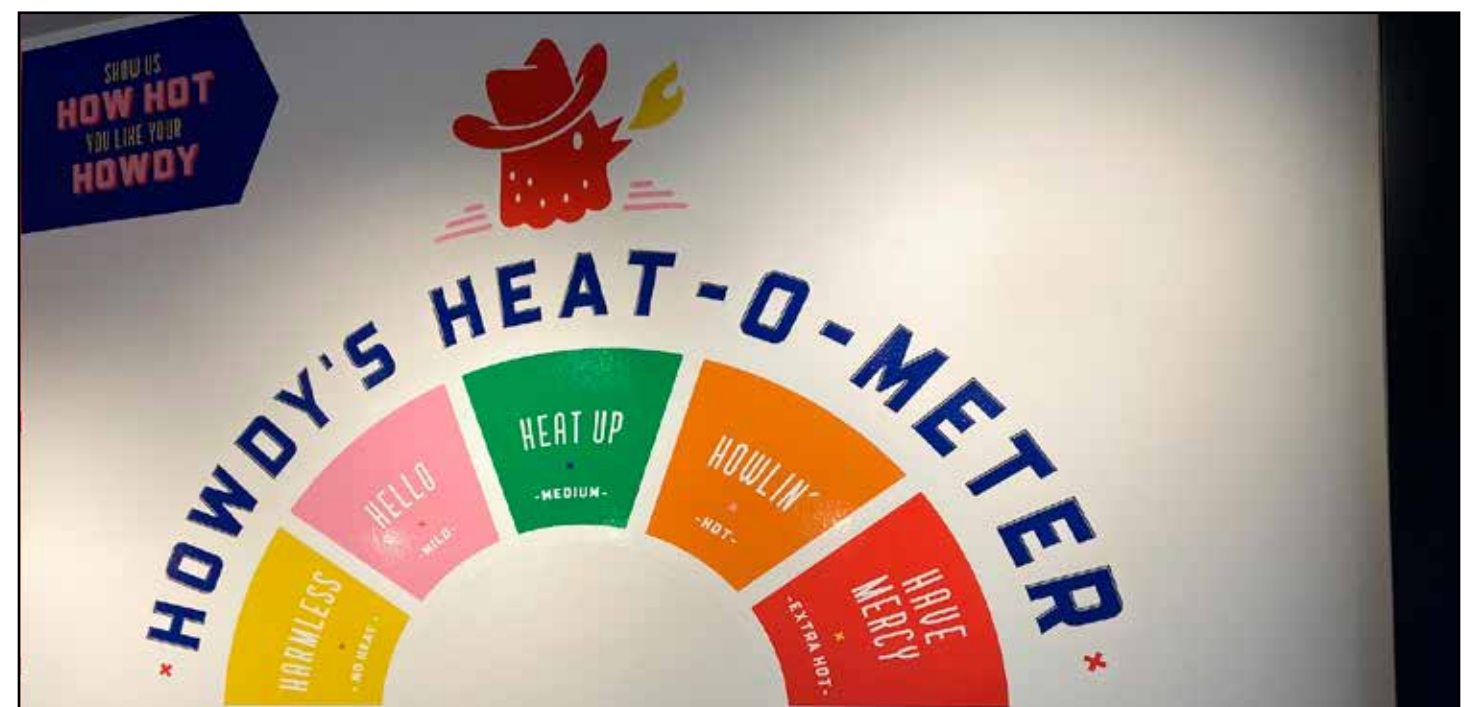
than that mess the rest of the restaurant was clean and busy.

The menu for Howdy Chicken is small and effective. With there being limited options my choice was not difficult. Howdy offers two kinds of chicken sandwiches; one on a regular bun, and one on a Texas toast bun. They also offer two kinds of "baskets": The Howdy basket with just chicken tenders, fries, and Texas toast. The other basket is the one I ordered: The Loaded Chicken Fries. They also offer a chicken wrap alongside three optional sides to complement each meal. The sides are waffle fries, mac and cheese, or coleslaw. Another large aspect of the restaurant are the spice levels. There are 5 levels to choose from with each unique name. Level 0 is Harmless, Level 1 is Hello, Level 2 is Heat Up, Level 3 is Howlin', and Level 4 is Have Mercy. Wanting to focus on flavor I chose level 1 for my spice level. My meal consisted of fries sitting in a pool of queso, with chicken, coleslaw, and the Howdy sauce resting on top. While fairly messy to eat, the meal was delicious. The chicken was surprisingly hotter than expected considering it was only level 1 heat, however the sweet coleslaw and sweet sauce balanced out all the flavors well. The heat levels can be quite deceiving at times. Considering by the end of my meal I was dealing with way more heat than expected,



I may caution others to stay away from the higher levels unless their tolerance to spice is high.

Overall Howdy Chicken is an excellent restaurant and I still had an enjoyable experience. The food was cooked to perfection and the staff treated the customers well. I am going to give Howdy Chicken a 7.5/10. It has a couple missteps but overall has an incredibly bright future ahead of itself.





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*Cover Design by
Robert Longo*