



THE INQUISITOR

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Queen of the May

By: Addie-Quinn Kammerdeiner

Every year, Seton has the lovely tradition of crowning a statue of our Blessed Mother the Monday after Mother's Day. The students all bring in flowers to lay at the feet of the statue and are encouraged to say a prayer while laying them down in honor of Mary. This year there was a small statue of Mary in the Corpus Christi building where students on that side of the school could offer up their flowers. The baskets of blossoms were then taken into the gym and placed under the statue of Mary's Immaculate Heart.

Usually, Seton crowns Mary at All Saints Catholic Church, but because of COVID-19, this tradition had to be held at Seton. Having the entire school community together to crown our heavenly Mother made it extra special, as last year only the May court was permitted at the crowning.

This May Crowning was also significant as it was our first Mass, celebrated by Father Moseman, that the whole school attended in the gym. One sophomore student recalled that "it was nice to celebrate Mass with the rest

of the school. I also thought it was super cute how the younger, newer students didn't really know what was going on when we said the prayers before Mass, since we haven't done them all year! It was also nice to be able to hear the priest and be able to really participate with everyone."

The May Crowning Court consisted of Pamela Medina as May Queen, Marie Heisler and Lizzie H. represented the seniors, Clare Witter for the juniors, Amelie Halisky for the sophomores, Lily Griffin for the freshman, Clara Condon and Molly Bauer for the eighth grade, and Christina Curran for the seventh grade.

It is always an honor to crown the Queen of Heaven as a school and to sing collectively and give our Lord praise. This year our school sung even louder in gratefulness at being able to celebrate together! This tradition of the May Crowning is one that every Seton student remembers and cherishes, and all are ecstatic to see it continue on.



Summer Sun Makes You Strong

By: Charlotte Yelvington

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Summer should be a time of relaxation and rest. The school year causes students a lot of stress, and any summer break under three months is not enough time for students to relax before going back to school. A longer summer would be a big morale boost for kids, and it would give students time to do the things they enjoy and do not have time for during the school year. With a longer summer, students could even have a job long enough that switching from summer hours to school hours would be a breeze.

A full three months of summer would be a big morale boost for stressed students. Working for nine months puts a lot of stress on kids for a long amount of time. Break calms students down and gives them more motivation for the coming school year. Longer breaks will also help alleviate some of the stress that is put on kids by giving them a chance to relax. One student says, "School takes up your whole day. You wake up at 7am and you finish work at 9pm, which makes you work all day long. Students have no time to do any hobbies. During summer you have the whole day to yourself and to learn about yourself. A longer summer would help take some of the stress away from school and give us a break." It is important for kids to have a break from working so hard and to finally be able to do the things that they enjoy. A longer break will improve students' happiness because it gives kids a chance to enjoy themselves.

A longer summer would allow an easy transition from working summer hours to school year hours. During the school year, it is difficult for students to maintain their grades and have an after-school job. Summer is the perfect opportunity for students to get a job and have enough time to get comfortable with it before going back to school. One sophomore girl says that "If we had more time in the summer to get a job and get comfortable with it, then it would be easier to transition from working in the summer to working in the school year. There would be so much less stress." Students with jobs are lucky because they gain experience in the working world, and every student should have the opportunity to get a job and acclimate to it before the stress of school begins. Three full months of summer would give students a chance to be more confident with their job before the stress of school begins.

Students need a full three months to recuperate from the hard school year and have time to do things they want to do. A longer summer also gives students the perfect opportunity to get a job if they desire. Anything under three months of summer vacation is simply not enough time for students to relax, do what they want, and to have a job.



National Honor Society

By: Jenna Novacosky

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Chapter of the NHS had another great year. Mrs. Lucas, faculty advisor for Seton's chapter, explains how "The National Honor Society was founded in 1921 to promote appropriate recognition for students who reflect outstanding accomplishments in the areas of scholarship, character, leadership and service." Characterized by these four essential pillars, the NHS gives young people a chance to strive for excellence in and out of school. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the founding of the NHS, marking a special year in its history. Seton's Chapter was chartered in 1976, and currently has 69 active members. 19 new members were inducted on April 14th, 2021 and 18 will graduate this June. There is usually a formal celebration for inductees with a school assembly that includes a candle-lit entrance and a guest speaker. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, members,

inductees, and families gathered in the Queen of Angels Chapel for a smaller ceremony.

Being a part of the NHS has many benefits that students appreciate. One sophomore comments that she "joined the NHS because it looks good for college applications and it'll teach [her] responsibility and how to manage [her] time. It's also a good way for [her] to get to know more people from Seton." Although NHS eligibility is determined mainly by grades, qualifying applicants also must fill out a separate application and be interviewed. If they are accepted into the program, students are then required to attend meetings on the first Monday of every month and have additional responsibilities to assist the Seton community. NHS is a great opportunity and goal for all high school students!



A Night in Tuscany: Prom 2021

By: Elizabeth Dwane

This year, prom was a far more complicated event than it usually is due to COVID restrictions. Initially, when trying to organize it, there were difficulties, such as finding a venue, that would accept all of the juniors and seniors. There were more students attending than the venues thought they would be able to accept. There were concerns that some people would not be able to attend, but luckily, the Senior Student Council with the help of Mrs. Smith managed to secure Piedmont Club in Haymarket, and all seniors and juniors were able to come to the event. The dance took place on May 7th with the theme “A Night in Tuscany.” The attendees arrived at 7:00 in the evening, the venue elegantly decorated for the event. Junior Sophie Zadnik described it as “simple and really pretty.” The seating was inside and outside of a covered patio, separated by glass doors, which allowed plenty of room for dancing and fun. One of the highlights of the event was the junior dance, where the juniors choreographed and performed a comical dance for the seniors. The songs they danced to were “Da Da Da” by the Trio and “Got My Mind Set on You” by George Harrison. A few juniors reported afterwards that it was in a small space and they kept “running into each other”, but in the end it was worth it since the seniors seemed to enjoy it. The dancing continued into the night, and the event ended at 11:00 PM. The juniors and seniors of Seton School were truly blessed to be able to enjoy such an event this year, regardless of the obstacles met along the way.



Pious Pilgrimage

By: Elizabeth Moore

Each year, Seton School goes on a pilgrimage to Emmitsburg, Maryland to visit the National Shrine of Elizabeth Ann Seton, for whom our school is named. The Shrine is where Elizabeth Ann Seton is buried, as well as where she spent the last years of her life. You can even see a dent in the marble where she knelt for hours each day, offering her mind, body, and spirit to God.

The Basilica itself is an astonishing sight on its own; filled with marvelously carved marble statues of Our Lady and her humble servants in Heaven, as well as stained glass windows of saints who, like Mother Seton, dedicated their lives to teaching the ways of God to those who were previously unaware.

The most stunning place in the Basilica, other than directly in front of the altar, is the choir loft where a few of the members of Seton's Chamber Choir, led by Miss Monica Vicente, sing each year during our Mass. From the loft, all of the stain glass windows of the Saints glow in multi-colored light from directly below the loft and are nearly eye level when one stands behind the carved marble balcony.

The Mass this year was said by Father Isenberg, who is a Seton alumnus. Directly after Mass, the fathers and brothers of the families filling the Basilica led a rosary for our Seton community. After the rosary, families went to picnic in a shaded area of the grounds. Often the weather makes picnicking a challenge as rain is frequent, but this year the Seton community was treated to a beautiful day! The picnic luncheon was surrounded in faith, fun, and friends galore. The picnic area itself was filled with trees and flowers, and a small stream could be heard as children played on the swing set and playground.

Overall, this years' retreat was just as, if not more, beautiful than our previous years'. A deep love for Christ and our patron saint was evident in the faces of all who came to visit her and offer their hearts to her and our spiritual families.



Seussical the Musical: A Seuccess

By: Noelle Peters

Another year of Seton must mean another Seton musical. This year was a huge jump from the musical last year, Fiddler on the Roof. Most musicals have singing and acting scenes, however the Seussical has much more singing and almost every line is a song. The Seussical was different from the years before because everything rhymes! Mrs. Vander Woude points out how much easier casting roles was to the various characters because everyone could act their age. "Seussical was more of a modern and energetic musical than the years before." Mrs. Vander Woude says.

There was a wide range of leads for the Seussical from seniors to seventh graders. Paulina Gomez, who played Amazing Mayzie, says, "The best part is always seeing it all come together, because up until two weeks beforehand you can't picture it. Then when the stage is together and everyone is helping out, you can see it come together."

Each member of the Seussical had a favorite part about their experience. "My favorite part was tech week when I got to hang out with everyone. Even if we are all tired, it's still super fun," says Emma Catabui, who played one of the Bird Girls. Many other actors loved

tech week. They said it was when they made new friendships and bonded with fellow cast members.

Mrs. Vander Woude also points out that there were many deep things to think about appearing in Seussical. "There were many messages for adults slipped into the Seussical, which can surprise you because it's not typically thought to be a high school play." Some of the lines to think about were "anything is possible", as in having a wonderful musical during a pandemic, and "a person's a person no matter how small". Another line pointed out appeared in the song from the Sour Kangaroo, played by Maggie Kleb. In her song she sings "someone is thinking different than us", which Mrs. Vander Woude points out is something to think about. "People can identify to what the group is thinking and not think of what is true and beautiful by themselves." Mrs. Vander Woude says.

The musical was a big success. A huge shout out to the many talented actors and actresses, supporting crew and parents who make it all happen.



Ending the Sports Year

By: Charlotte Yelvington

While 2021 was crazy with COVID restrictions, Seton was still able to have a great year for sports. A highlight to the year was definitely the spring sports. Lacrosse, baseball, softball, girls' soccer and boys' tennis all played their best during the season. Their games were exciting to watch and had the whole Seton community buzzing with sports news.

Lacrosse

With games against Saint John Paul the Great, Fredericksburg Christian, and Trinity School, the lacrosse team faced some tough opponents in the 2021 season. Although several games were cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions, the team was able to play in six games. Through their hard work and dedication, the team won one of their six games and were winning another of their games before it was canceled due to rain. Congratulations to the lacrosse team on a season well played and to the graduating seniors for playing so well for the Conquistadors.

Baseball

The baseball team played their best in the 2021 spring season. The team played against Trinity Christian, Fairfax Homeschool, The Heights, Legacy Christian Academy, Saint John Paul the Great, and NOVA. With one win out of eleven games, the team faced worthy opponents. Although the season did not play out the way they wished, the team tried their hardest, especially the four seniors on the team. The boy's team was truly inspiring for their perseverance during the season.

Softball

The softball team had a great season. Having won three out of their seven games, they truly played their best. The girls played against the fierce teams of Saint John Paul the Great, Brookewood School, Oakcrest, and Osbourn High School. Although the competition was tough, the girls had a great season and represented Seton well. Good job to the whole team for a job well done, especially the two seniors leading the team.

Girls' Varsity Soccer

The girls' soccer team dominated this season with six wins against the Saint John Paul the Great, Oakcrest, Chelsea Academy, Fairfax Home School and Saint John's Home School teams. Through the coaching skills of Mr. Duran, the team played a great season. Congratulations to the soccer team, especially the six seniors, for an outstanding season.

Boys' Tennis

Another team with a successful season was boys' tennis. The close-knit team worked hard during the spring season. They faced Saint John Paul the Great, Paul VI, Bishop Ireton, Bishop O'Connell, and The Heights. The five seniors on the team led the group through the season and a huge congratulations goes out to them for ending their last year on the Seton tennis team!

Although the year has been difficult for the sports teams, Seton managed to have notable seasons for all of the teams. A huge thank you goes out to all the coaches and administrators who made this year happen for all the players. The effort put into the scheduling and planning has been a highlight of the school year for many. Your dedication to the school has not gone unnoticed and is extremely appreciated. Although 2021 was an interesting year for Seton sports teams, the spring season was as exciting as previous years. All the teams played their best and represented Seton with pride. The games were fun and exciting, and Seton looks forward to having another great year of sports. Have a great summer, Conquistadors!



Celebrating Our Parents

By: Jenna Novecosky

Every year, Mothers and Fathers around the world are celebrated with their own special holidays. This tradition, which gives parents a chance to relax and be spoiled by their kids, was first unofficially started in the 1860s with “Mother’s Work Days”. These days were set apart for mothers of Confederate and Union soldiers. However, Mother’s Day was an unofficial holiday until 1914 when President Woodrow Wilson approved the second Sunday in May as a holiday to honor “that tender, gentle army, the mothers of America.”

The Concept of Father’s Day began in 1908 when a West Virginia church sponsored an event in honor of fathers. At first it was simply a one-time event in memory of 362 men who died in explosions at the Fairmont Coal Company mines in Monongah. The following year, a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd successfully partnered with local churches, the YMCA, shopkeepers, and government officials to establish an official holiday. Then, on June 19th, 1910, Washington State celebrated the nation’s first statewide Father’s Day.

Over 100 years later, the tradition is still celebrated in many ways. Some children buy gifts, other children bake, and many children make homemade crafts. Here are some ways that Seton students enjoy these special holidays.

One anonymous student explains how she celebrates her parents, saying, “I write a letter every year for my mom and dad, telling them why I love them and how appreciative I am of them.” Writing heartfelt letters is an awesome gift idea for all ages.

Another student shares her favorite way of celebrating Father’s Day. “We spend the afternoon outside grilling burgers for dinner. Then we eat the burgers on our deck with fries and salad. I love this way to celebrate Father’s Day because we eat and bond over burgers!!!”, she explains.

Abby Ramos, a sophomore at Seton, likes to take a fun and basic approach to Mother’s Day. She likes to wake up early and prepare breakfast in bed for her mom. “I make her scrambled eggs, pancakes, bacon, and iced tea”, says Abby. This is a traditional and thoughtful gift for kids to make breakfast for their moms.



A Beginner’s Guide to Gardening

By: Elizabeth Moore

Spring has sprung and with it comes the endless yearn for the smell of fresh-picked produce and flowers upon the kitchen table. With the weather warming up and the earth once again becoming fertile, this creates the perfect time of year to begin an at-home-garden!

Here are four simple steps to create your very own garden!

1. For the beginning of the gardening adventure, find a good place to plant your new biological-buds! Whether it be pots or an average plot of soil, anywhere is a good place for plant pals.
 2. If using pots, get some good soil or fertilizer to help nourish the growth of the plants.
 3. If using seeds, put them in a type of decomposable pot--or even eggshells-- before transferring them to the garden once they have sprouted. If using seeds, poke a hole in the dirt and drop the seed in before covering and packing it down. After this, water the plants regularly: at least four times a week.
- If planting an already sprouted plant, gently take the plant out of the container, gently squeezing the bottom (if plastic) as to allow for the roots to escape easier.
4. If putting a plant into the ground, dig a hole ¼ larger than the plant and its roots. Gently place the plant in the hole before filling the remainder with dirt. Make sure to weed at least twice a week. You may need to put a net over the plants in order to protect them from birds and other wildlife.

If you closely follow these simple steps you will have a beautiful garden in no time. Have a happy and healthy summer!



Soul Surfer: The Story of Bethany Hamilton

By: Addie-Quinn Kammerdeiner

Soul Surfer was made in 2011 and was a movie based on the autobiography *Soul Surfer: A True Story of Faith, Family, and Fighting to Get Back on the Board*. This movie expressed the difficulties of Bethany Hamilton, a real girl who lost her arm in a shark attack when she was only thirteen. This movie is not just about the story of Bethany and how she lost her arm, but also about her faith journey as a Christian and how her sufferings brought her closer to Christ.

The film starts off with showing videos of Bethany and her family, showing how she grew up surfing and living in the water with a voiceover explaining her early story by AnnaSophia Robb who played Bethany Hamilton. Then, it shows Bethany and her friend Alana signing up for a big surfing competition. To compete in this competition, however, Bethany had to drop out of a mission trip that she was going on, which disappointed her youth ministry leader who was played by Carrie Underwood.

After a scene of night surfing and partying that Bethany and Alana sneak off to do, the movie goes on to show the day that Bethany lost her arm. In the morning, Bethany went out on a surfing trip with her best friend, Alana, and Alana's father and brother. A shark bit off Bethany's arm along with part of her surfboard, making this trip go from fun to terrifying. She was rushed to the hospital where her father was about to have a knee surgery. Her father gave up the operating room he was in so the doctors could give the room to his daughter.

When Bethany recovered and was released from the hospital, she had to learn how to live her life again, including surfing. One month after the attack, she was determined to get back on her board. The movie showed montages of her father trying to coach her on how to surf again, but she couldn't get up onto the board. Her father created a handle to put onto her surfboard so that she had the momentum and help to bring herself up and stand on her surfboard.

Along with scenes of Bethany joining competitions again, the film also showed the mission trip that gave Bethany the motivation to continue on, despite her new struggle. She travelled to Thailand after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami, bringing food and water and helping to clean up some of the leftover mess. On this trip, Bethany met a child who was terrified of the ocean after the tsunami. Bonding with this little boy, she started to teach him to touch the water and, eventually, to surf on a little makeshift board made of debris.

By helping this little boy get over his fear of the ocean, Bethany became even more determined to get on her board and win a surfing competition. The final scene of the movie takes place at the big surfing competition for which she has been training. We won't spoil the ending for you here. A reporter asked Bethany if she would undo the loss of her arm if she could and she replied, "I would still lose it because I can embrace more people now than I ever could with both."

In real life, Bethany Hamilton went on to start charities for those with traumatic limb loss while also continuing her professional surfing career. As of now, Bethany is married to youth minister, Adam Dirks, and has three sons named Tobias, Wesley, and Micah. Bethany Hamilton has inspired so many from her traumatic experience, determination, and love of God and she will continue to inspire for many more years to come!

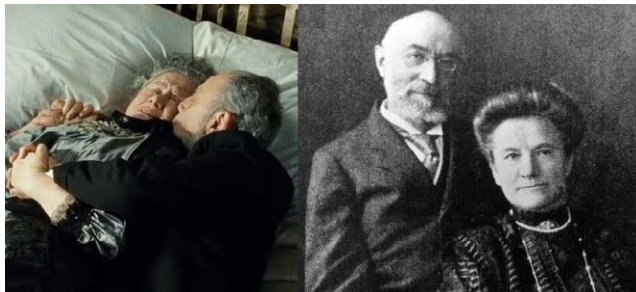


Near, Far, Wherever You Are

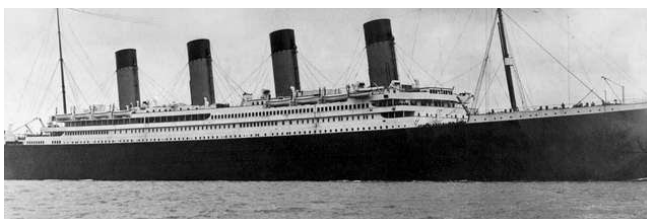
By: Abby Ramos

It has been almost 109 years since the Titanic sank. On April 10, 1912, the Titanic set sail for a six-day journey, but the ship sank just 4 days after. Although it was a horrible tragedy, we can learn more about this event with these interesting, bizarre facts!

1. The couple who founded the department store Macy's was on the Titanic. When they found out the ship was sinking, they decided to just stay on the ship to give the younger passengers a chance to live. The couple can be remembered in the Titanic movie, where there is a small scene of an old couple in their room as the Titanic sinks.



2. There was a couple on the Titanic scamming chess players. This couple put a barrier between two chess players and then the woman played them in different games at the same time. So, the woman would switch between the games. The trick was that she would use the same moves from the chess players on each other. For example, if one of the chess players moved a chess piece forward- the woman would go to the other chess player and move the chess piece forward. She inherently just used their masterful moves on each other to win both games and got a lot of money. Sadly, they wouldn't get to spend it as they did not survive the sinking.
3. The third class had to share 2 bathtubs. One for the women and one for the men.
4. There was a room for insane people and a barber shop on board.
5. At the time, the Titanic was the largest man-made moving object in the world.



6. This expensive and luxurious ship cost \$7.5 million to build. Before the ship even took off, eight people died
7. One of the richest people in the world at the time was on board named John Jacob Astor IV.
8. A military man, Robert Ballard, accidentally found the wreck of the Titanic. He was originally looking for two nuclear submarines and he accidentally stumbled upon the Titanic.



9. There were 13 honeymooning couples on the Titanic, one being John Jacob Astor IV.
10. One of the ship's musicians wasn't officially declared dead until 2000.
11. There's a rumor that a few men dressed up as women to get a spot in a lifeboat.
12. Milton Hershey, the creator of the Hershey company, was supposed to be on the Titanic when it first set sail. Right before the Titanic sailed, Hershey couldn't go because he had a last minute business meeting, which literally saved his life.
13. Two brothers, Edmond and Michel Navratil, survived the sinking without parental supervision. They were on the Titanic because their father kidnapped them from their mother to take them to America. Then when the ship was sinking, their father put them on a lifeboat and they survived.

The Titanic was such an awful tragedy, but thankfully we have learned from this sad event and improved the safety of ships and cruises now. Although this event ended the lives of many, they are all remembered and will continue to live on near, far, or wherever they are.

Put This on Your “Bucket” List!

By: Abby Ramos

Summertime is here, the perfect time to catch some sun, get tan, and go to the beach! For this tropical season, a bucket hat would be the perfect accessory to wear on a hot summer day. This bucket hat is super simple to make and all you need is a sewing machine, thread, and fabric. It's the perfect accessory to all of your clothes and you can make it to fit your own style.

Materials

1. Bucket hat template to cut the shapes of the fabric- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5742615bf699bb27dcd1bcef/t/5f46cc2a51f1955e84745b74/1598475306915/Essentials+Club+-+Bucket+Hat+Template.pdf>
2. ½ meter of thick fabric (ex- denim and terry cloth) OR old jeans/shorts
3. Scissors
4. Sewing pins
5. Thread
6. Sewing machine

Directions

1. Pin the template on top of the fabric with sewing pins and cut out, following the directions with folding the fabric. You should have:
 - 1 Circle top
 - 2 Headbands
 - 4 Brims
2. Sew headband panels by the short edge: Lay the sides of the headband that you want to be shown to face each other. Make sure the edges are aligned.

3. Attach the headband piece (the sewed pieces) to the circle top with sewing pins. Flip the headband piece inside out and attach the smaller circle of the headband piece (where the slant was \) to the circle top. For the circle top, have the side you don't want to be shown facing up.
4. For the brims, sew 2 brim pieces together by the long edges and with the good side facing each other. So after sewing, you should have 2 brim pieces in total. Then keep the brim flat and sew the two pieces together by the shorter edges. Then this will form one full circle brim.
5. To make the brim sturdy, you sew lines going around the brim with one inch margins between each line.
6. Attach the brim to the headband/circle top piece. The side you don't want to be shown of both pieces should be sewn together.
7. You're done! You can even add some embroidery to make your bucket hat even more unique. You can do this with sewing needle and friendship bracelet string.

Youtube video for visuals:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNcMxUMaQYA>

This bucket hat is perfect for the summer and can match any style. It is super easy to make and it can spice up any of your outfits. Making bucket hats can also be the beginning of a new hobby or even just to put your creativity into something that you can make. Hope you enjoy making it and don't forget to put this on your “bucket” list!



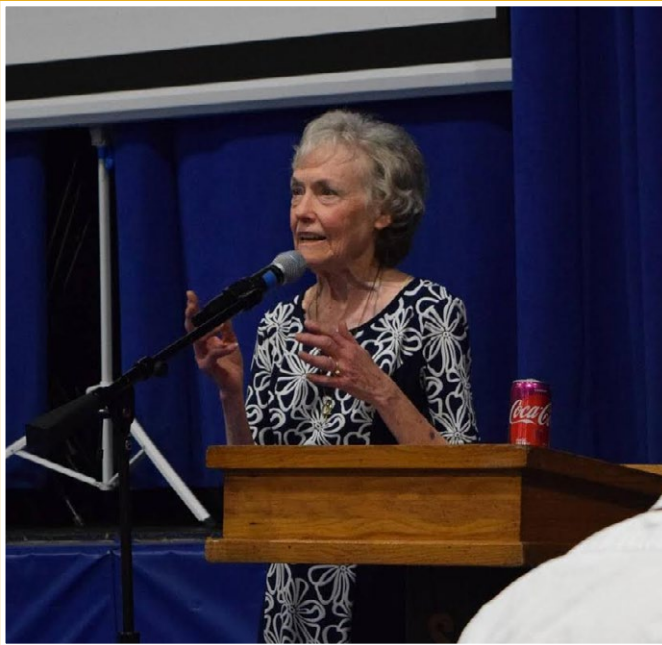
A Banquet of Memories

By: Elizabeth Dwane

This year's Senior Banquet took place on May 10th in the gymnasium at Seton School. The seniors found seats and enjoyed dinner, while juniors served them food. A slideshow of Seton memories was presented, and multiple speeches were given by both students and teachers.

According to senior Zoe Hilbert, "The highlight of the event was either the slideshow, or Mrs. Carroll's speech," because they "brought back so many memories from our years at Seton." She continued to explain that "Mrs. Carroll told a story about each year the seniors were at Seton. She recalled memories and funny moments from each year, and the students who joined our grade

along the way." Mr. Westhoff also contributed to recalling these memories. For example, they played the birthday game, which is a game where he calls out numbers of months and dates until there is only a few people standing, whose month or date he did not call. They also did a few chants that they used to do in his class. The student speeches given by Michael Allen and Patrick Reynolds, dwelt on a more comical side, including funny memories and inside jokes. The seniors took a class picture, then the event concluded. The Senior Banquet was a fun and nostalgic way to remember the graduating seniors' past as high school students, and look forward to graduating into a whole different world.

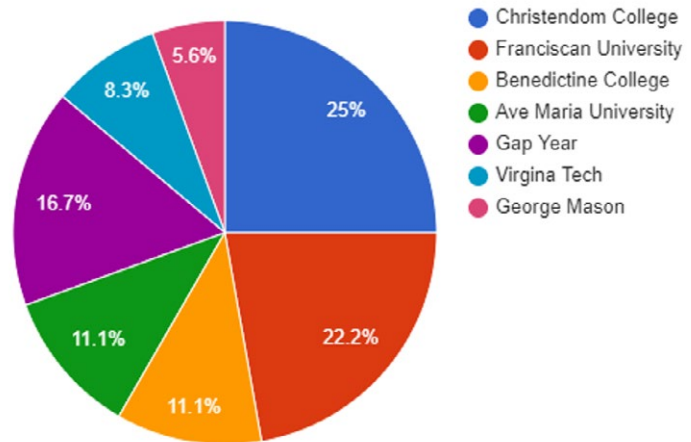


Seton Seniors Signing Off

The Seton 2021 seniors will be heading off soon! We wish you all the best! Here's a peek at where they are all headed and a graphic of the Top 7 results.

Lucy Avila de la Trinidad	Ave Maria University
Kaitlyn Grinder	Ave Maria University
Sofie Harangozo	Ave Maria University
Teresa Kerlek	Ave Maria University
Sara Desrosiers	Beauty School
Cormac Clune	Benedictine College
Bernadette Irving	Benedictine College
CeCe Pogue	Benedictine College
Peter Reyes	Benedictine College
Jillian Riley	Bridgewater College
Alex Dean	Christendom College
Michael Dominguez	Christendom College
Maria Fusco	Christendom College
Rachel Harbour	Christendom College
Marie Heisler	Christendom College
Eibhilin McCloskey	Christendom College
Brian Pascoe	Christendom College
Veronica Scheetz	Christendom College
Damian Smith	Christendom College
Victoria Baker	Cornell University
Jerry Dalrymple	Duquesne University (ROTC)
Andrew Angsten	Franciscan University
Josh Atkinson	Franciscan University
Anna Francis	Franciscan University
Emma Hickey	Franciscan University
Timothy Kelly	Franciscan University
Rachel Luetkemeyer	Franciscan University
Teresa Mosimann	Franciscan University
Joan Rohan	Franciscan University
Lucy Ciskanik	Gap Year
Zoe Hilbert	Gap Year
John Moore	Gap Year
Catie Pacheco	Gap Year
Jack Santschi	Gap Year

Vincent Verrocchio	Gap Year
Carlos Garcia	George Mason University
Lainie Vestermark	George Mason University
Elizabeth H.	Germanna Community College
Annie Stevens	James Madison University
Daniel Byers	Northern Virginia Community College
Patrick Reynolds	Northern Virginia Community College
Aaron Forman	Southern New Hampshire University
Magdalena Mallory	St. John's University (Queens)
Pamela Medina	Thomas Aquinas College (CA)
Lydia O'Keefe	University of Dallas
Virginia Hartung	University of Mary
Liam Kellogg	University of South Carolina (ROTC)
Evan Wilson	Virginia Military Institute
Trey Bauer	Virginia Tech
Kyle Da Re	Virginia Tech
Lydia Lewandowski	Virginia Tech



The Palace Hotel

A Writing Relay

Order of writers: Addie-Quinn Kammerdeiner, Charlotte Yelvington, Jenna Novecosky, Elizabeth Moore, Elizabeth Dwane, Noelle Peters, Abby Ramos

1. The streets of Paris were unusually quiet and empty. The City of Light was dark and it seemed that the Eiffel Tower was even covering from the darkness. I wrapped my trench coat tighter around my body. Was the air colder even though it was the middle of July?

All of the sudden my mouth was covered by a leather glove and I was thrown into an alley wall. My heart pounded out of my chest while I tried to scream for help. The dark figure in front of me placed a finger to his lips and made a quiet “hush” sound. “Brielle DeRose, be in the lobby of the Palace Hotel at midnight,” his deep voice rushed out before he seemed to vanish right before my eyes.

I looked down at my watch while my lungs were on fire. I only had thirty minutes to get across the city.

2. Looking around for any form of transportation to get me across the city, my eyes fell on a lone moped parked on the curb. I saw a man walking towards the scooter and I ran over to him, frantically begging him to let me borrow his ride. After some hesitation, he handed me the keys and I ran across the street to the small vehicle.

The brisk air of the night ran through my hair as I drove down the streets. I was speeding through the city as excitement built up inside of me. This adventure was a change from my boring life and I welcomed it with open arms.

I pulled up to the Palace Hotel and I saw a grand building before me, lit up like a Christmas tree. As I walked inside, I saw an unfamiliar young man in a leather jacket and sunglasses waving at me.

3. “Brielle!” he greeted me with a friendly smile, “We’ve been expecting you.” Filled with confusion and excitement, I walked through the lobby door that he held open. As I was led through a fancy entry hall and down a flight of stairs glowing with candlelight, I tried to figure out why this strange man seemed to know me so well.

As we reached the bottom floor and stepped into an oddly deserted banquet room, he gestured to a dark door marked with a red symbol. “There’s your room, Ms. DeRose. There’s exactly twenty-three minutes till the great grandfather clock strikes midnight.”

Beginning to feel insecure in my surroundings, I stuttered, “Sir, how did you know my name? Where do I go at midnight?” His bright green eyes glanced down at his watch and then back at me as he replied in a steady voice, “Twenty-two minutes left.” Then he disappeared.

4. I slowly began to glance about the room as I internally wondered just what I had gotten into. Apart from the tall, richly stained clock which showed that I was only left twenty minutes ‘till I met hand-in-hand with my impending fate, there were little decorations in the unfamiliar room; nothing of note apart from a striking design on the pot of a rather nondescript plant. My eyes returned to the clock. Nineteen minutes. It mocked me.

Eternity seemed to flutter past me as I glared back at the ancient clock. After another thirty seconds of begging for my suffering of waiting to be over, my eyes were caught by a slight silver gleam from underneath the feet of the clock. He stood grandly as my curiosity piqued, prompting me to kneel before the dark clock and reach down. I felt my fingers tighten around a cool metallic object: a blade.

5. My eyes widened in surprise as I withdrew my hand, eyeing the weapon. The design was beautiful, with engraved vines twisting around the handle and ever so slightly creeping onto the blade. I fingered the edge curiously, but frowned when I found that the blade was dull. I scoffed and turned around, tossing it onto the banquet table. It landed on the mahogany surface with a clatter. “Such a beautiful object, yet hardly of any use,” I murmured.

A low creak behind me interrupted my thoughts and I whirled around, startled. My eyes widened as I watched the grandfather clock swing forward like a door, revealing a darkened passageway. A woman stepped out of the shadows, clothed in a leather trench coat. Her piercing black eyes gleamed at me before glancing at the table behind me where I had left the knife. She chuckled. “Naïve, you’re going to need that.”

6. She snapped her slender fingers and a rush of hooded men swarmed around me. “Where is it!” She yelled; her voice like needles.

I widened my eyes and stumbled back.

“What do you mean? The blade?” I stuttered and I kept stumbling back until I was against the wall. Her eyes narrowed as she closed in.

“No you imbecile! The key! I know you have it.” She hissed at me.

“I-I have no idea what you’re talking about or who you are! You must have the wrong girl!” I stuttered as I felt my arms against the wall. I was surrounded and they were coming in close. I looked around at the hooded figures until I recognized one: the man who had gotten me into this mess. I looked at him with pleading eyes and desperately hoped he believed me. Then, as if I were dreaming he winked at me.

7. “Just think,” said the man that I recognized, holding the blade out at me, “is there anything happening today?”

I thought of anything that could hint to what he was talking about. “I’m sorry, but I don’t know. You have the wrong girl,” I pleaded with him. The man came even closer.

“Ok,” he calmly said, “Here’s a hint. What’s today?”

“July 14?” I said. I was so stressed that I couldn’t even think of anything that would be going on today. Can they kill me for not knowing what today was?

“And?” he questioned me, while looking at me as if I would know what he was talking about.

Then it hit me. It was my birthday today, but what would that have to do with it? “Uh, it’s my birthday?”

“Bingo!” the man said, “Everybody, reveal yourself!”

Then, they took off their hoods and they were my family and friends.

