

# THE LAUNCH PAD

Volume XVIII Issue 2



Winter 2022

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>Robotics</i>                   | 2 |
| <i>The Mother Ship</i>            | 3 |
| <i>Costume Craziiness</i>         | 4 |
| <i>Grammar/Eighth Period</i>      | 5 |
| <i>Art &amp; Music</i>            | 6 |
| <i>Calendar/Scene at CHS</i>      | 7 |
| <i>Physical Fitness Nationals</i> | 8 |

Dear Parents,

Looking through the winter issue of this publication, we hope a word that comes to your mind is *engaged*. We tried to find examples and stories that reflected the spirit we have seen at Catholic High during the fall of 2021.

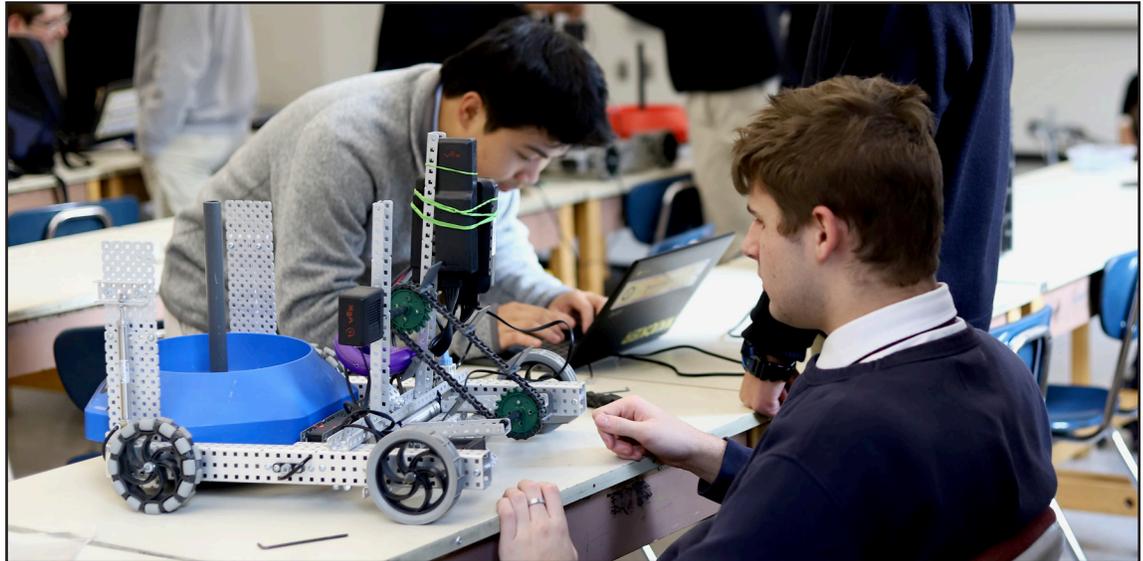
Maybe it's the idea that time is precious and that we're not sure exactly what will happen next. Every teacher and most of the boys seem to be trying to make the most of their days here.

We'll allow the photos and stories to show you what we mean. Boys are at work in a robotics lab building competition robots; they're running fundraisers and volunteering for important community causes. They are taking advantage of class time and learning to master skills, to appreciate the arts, and to become physically fit.

We hope these pages show you that boys here are also having a really good time. It is obvious that they love being together in this space. They belong to something bigger than themselves as much as it belongs to them.

If you're new to this school, we welcome you and hope you and your sons stay around for a few years.

—the editor



Juniors Peter Ha and John Harton mount the “brain” to their robot. They are preparing their entry for the Vex Robotics Competition Tipping Point events. Students are building and programming their robots to accomplish particular skills such as moving objects around a course and lifting objects via a conveyor device they build into their robots.

## ROBOTICS STUDENTS BUILD, PROGRAM, AND COMPETE

A visitor to the physics lab during a robotics class cannot help but be intrigued by students working earnestly to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks.

Every student appears to be genuinely involved in science, technology, engineering, and math. While last year there was only one robotics class, there are now 65 students enrolled in three classes; two classes are Robotics I and the current eighth period class is Robotics II.

Robotics classes are obviously not traditional lecture-based classes. Everything must be hands-on. Instructor for the class is Mr. Paul Lincicome. He said, “I have not lectured once. The difference from our first year with robotics is that I am not learning along with the students. I can be more of an aid when they have problems.”

Students in these classes have specific goals to accomplish. They are building their robots for competition. Mr. Lincicome said, “Currently we have teams preparing for VEX Robotics Tipping Point Competition. Students design mobile robots for a specific task each year. Teams also prepare for the Factory Automation Challenge which is a stationary robotic arm competition.”

Mr. Lincicome is hopeful that the state competition be will in-person, but for now the CHS team will film their robots in action to qualify for the next step.

Since the robotics program is in only its second year, Mr. Lincicome has not set any official prerequisites for either Robotics I or II. “I let some students from [Mr. Matt Dempsey’s] computer science class join Robotics II without taking Robotics I. I’m not sure I will do that next year. We are capped at around 60 students.”

This school has a reputation as one that produces good science and math students who often move on to engineering degrees and beyond. Assistant principal Mr. Matt Dempsey said, “Many of today’s college programs and many careers demand technological aptitude. We are proud to offer three computer courses (computer applications, introduction to computer science, AP Computer Science); Robotics I and II; and an aerospace course.

Principal Mr. Steve Straessle said, “Our math and science classes have always been top-notch as evidenced by the fact that we consistently rank in the top-three of Arkansas high schools with students matriculating to medical school. This is noteworthy in and of itself, but even more so when one notes that we’re an all-boys school and can account for only 50% of a medical school’s population.”

Sophomore Daniel Nkunga is the only tenth-grader in Robotics II and the only freshman who signed up for the first part of the course last year. He said, “I took the class because I thought it sounded fun. I took Robotics II because

# Back in the gym...



Early in the first semester, six seniors vying for student body president and their campaign managers pose for a post-campaign photo.



Supporters of student body president senior Jed Straessle put their shirts where their loyalty lies. The students elected Straessle president and seniors Ben Bauer and Ben Biernat as vice president and secretary/treasurer, respectively.



Mr. Bryan Jones proves he's willing to suffer for a good cause as he submits to a pie in the face as part of a fundraising effort for the Arkansas Prostrate Cancer Foundation. Photo by Phillip Zawislak



Student body officers Jed Straessle, Ben Bauer, and Ben Biernat present a check for over \$3000 to Mr. Chris Collins, executive director of the Arkansas Prostrate Cancer Foundation, after the students raised the money during "No Shave November." Photo by Phillip Zawislak

## ROBOTICS STUDENTS WORK WITH REAL-WORLD TECHNOLOGY

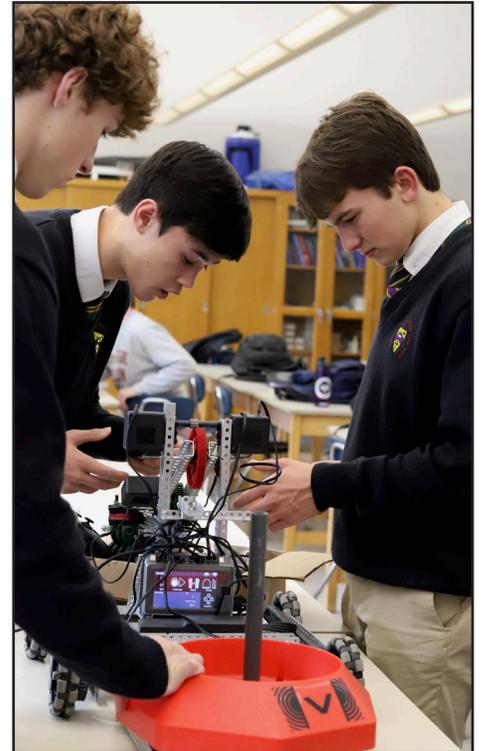
it introduced me into the world of coding and engineering, fields that always interested me but I never really had an avenue to explore.

"The class really made me consider a career in technology and engineering because each day is work but also incredibly fun. The class is a very open experience. What you put into it is what you get out of it; everyone's experience is different," said Nkunga.

The school has not only a committed teacher but also money for the equipment that ranges from metal grids to build each robot to the programmable "brains" that run everything. Mr. Straessle said, "We are fortunate that there is a huge amount of grant money available for robotics and we've been applying for it every chance we get. Paul Lincicome has done a good job of making sure the class is well equipped by finding myriad sources of funding outside of the school's level of commitment."

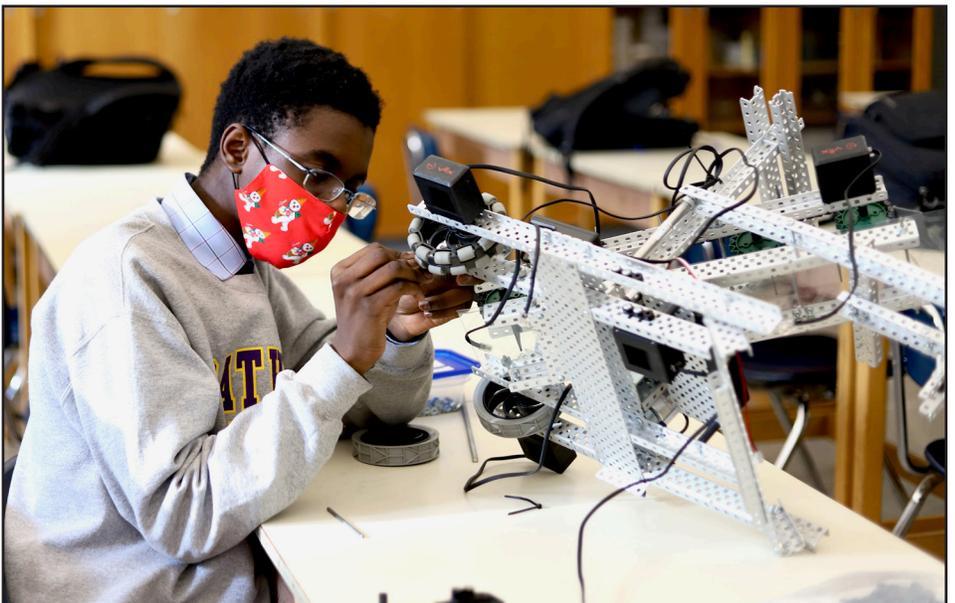


A competition robot stands ready to respond to remote commands. Students program the computers for specific tasks for competition.



Seniors Cayden Cook, Josh Ramsay, and Gary Hartzell, members of the Robotics II class, do some problem-solving on their competition robot.

Mr. Straessle is contemplating how to incorporate new courses every year. He said, "I think our future will continue to be focused on developing the whole boy with strong liberal arts, strong STEM, and strong theology. We continue to explore what that means in terms of specifics. We will shortly review the list of new classes proposed by teachers and go from there."



Sophomore Daniel Nkunga works diligently to perfect his team's creation. Nkunga is the only sophomore in Robotics II. He said, "Even if I spend a whole day just reattaching wheels, progress is always being made toward a larger goal. It's often challenging and sometimes frustrating but above all, it is fun."

# THE MOTHER SHIP

(A COLUMN FOR MOMS BY MOMS OF CHS GRADUATES)

DEAR MOTHERS [AND DADS] OF CURRENT AND FUTURE CHS STUDENTS,

If we tell you that we are parents of Catholic High graduates from early in this century, we sound extremely ancient. Well, maybe we are old, but as parents of (former) teenage boys who once walked the halls of Catholic High and found reasonable success as adults in the outside world, we have the task of giving you some advice about guiding your son as he begins his high school career.

We have kept in touch with many inside sources at the school including other parents and our sons' former teachers. We have a good idea about what's been happening at CHS in these past two challenging years. As you have probably heard, the teachers here take pride in stepping up in tough times. They remember — or learn — the words of Fr. George Tribou, a teacher, principal, and rector of the school for over four decades. Fr. Tribou said that the most beautiful word in the English language is *duty*.

So, back to our words of advice about your son as he makes his way through high school and learns to fulfill his duty. First, it depends on what kind of student your son is right now. Not that he is stuck in a particular mold. As a matter of fact, one great thing that we found about this school is that it offers boys the chance to reinvent themselves if they so choose. A boy who has been known as a class clown can decide to become a more serious student. A shy person can find his niche and a friend group in the great variety of personalities he will find on this campus.

But back to what kind of student your son is now. If he is motivated and enjoys a challenge, he will find challenge here. Many of our own sons were in this category. Our job as parents was simply being support staff during their high school years. We provided encouragement, but if they didn't complete an assignment, it was not our job to do it for them or to complain to the teacher about how difficult the work was. Sometimes it was our job to allow what Mr. Steve Straessle calls a "soft failure." This might occur if a boy crosses a line or doesn't meet a deadline. The parent's job is often to allow the boy to face whatever consequences occur. Better to have those soft failures and find a way to recover than have an adult swoop in.

But what about those who are not particularly self-starters, who struggle with meeting deadlines or completing assignments? Those guys may have a difficult time no matter where they go to school, but wise parents don't choose a school because it has low standards. We want our children to meet the highest standards of which they are capable. So here's the most concrete advice we can offer:

## THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS

People in the community know that our school's JROTC program stresses service. Throughout the year, the cadets work with many organizations to provide manpower for events. At Christmas, their generosity benefits veterans. They collect toiletry items and small gifts for patients in the two area VA hospitals. Pictured at left are Col. Charles Johnson, Santa (of course), and Sgt. Maj. Scott Jernigan.

At the time of this writing, a group of cadets is working with CHS volunteers from other groups and teams to facilitate the Martin Luther King Day of Impact on our campus. Sgt. Major Scott Jernigan asked for ten volunteers and got 30. They are unloading trucks directing traffic, and handing out food boxes to help those who are having a tough time now.

- **Talk to your son.** Find out how his days have been going. Where is he having problems? This is not an easy task. Ask specific questions. Which class is he connecting with? Which one does he hate? Why? What long-term assignments does he have? How are those going? A sneaky trick we learned early on was to use travel time to have these talks. Before a boy can drive himself, he has few options other than being stuck in a car with a parent. If he has friends along, so much the better. All you have to do then is to listen to gather a wealth of information.
- **With his input, plan a study space.** His room may not be that place. It should be an area as free of distractions as possible. Obviously, the main distractions boys have involve cell phones. You might suggest turning the phone off or at least ignoring notifications for a given amount of study time with scheduled breaks. Let him come up with a plan; but if his plan isn't working, you may need to intervene.
- **Encourage him to communicate with his teachers.** Occasionally, there will be advisory periods where students may visit with any teacher. However, if your son seems to be having a problem in a specific class, he needs to find a way to meet with that teacher sooner. He will find that teachers here are willing to make time to talk to a student who approaches them. Teachers give out their email addresses, so shy students have many opportunities to reach out to a teacher.
- **Suggest that he look for extracurricular activities and clubs.** The school offers a wide variety of teams, clubs, and leadership opportunities. Many are non-competitive and open to any interested student. Our most successful students find ways to be part of something bigger than themselves.
- **Find ways to observe his friend group.** It is most likely changing as he enters this new environment. Know that this is okay because he may have been around the same people for most of his life. When he sees the vast variety of personalities here, he may make new connections to find a good fit for himself. As always, a parent should be interested in a boy's friends. They are a reflection of the son's values and interests.
- **Seek help.** If you think your son is headed in the wrong direction, there are many people at the school who can offer insights and advice. There are experts in dyslexia and other learning differences, two experienced counselors, an alumnus chaplain, and fifty teachers who know teenage boys. From Catholic High's rector, Fr. Lawrence Frederick, to the newest teacher, 2017 alumnus Duncan Diaz, these people have your son's best interests at heart and want to work with you to make his experience a rewarding one.



*For some strange reason, Mr. Steve Straessle continues to ask the moms of the CHS classes of 2002 and 2003 to write this column.*



# ALL DRESSED UP — AND SOMEWHERE TO GO



Junior C. J. Onyekwelu and junior Chris Foley went all-out on their costumes. They adhered the rule that called for students to wear a school uniform under the costume. Foley remained in costume as he participated in all his classes.

This year's student body officers are also morale boosters for the school. They find ways to lighten the mood when things get a little too serious in the outside world. The officers decided that Halloween and Christmas presented perfect excuses to ransack closets for costumes and decorations.



An unidentified Air National Guard imposter suits up for the Halloween costume festivities.



Santa visited a junior American literature class — not to make lists of gifts for good CHS boys but to take notes. Santa (aka senior Jed Straessle) roamed the school between classes to blast Christmas songs and bring joy.



Junior Owen Fraley went with the popular theme of strange looking Christmas animals and monsters.



Senior Baker Lofton pauses mid-apple for a photo. All around him are boys in some of the ugliest Christmas sweaters imaginable. Garrett Jones, Connor Stahl, and Michael Esbaner sport matching Santa hats as they attend a Christmas-themed assembly before exam week. Senior Jacob Rivera could be wearing a Halloween costume or maybe he's trying for a Christmas reference to the conductor on the Polar Express.



# REVOLUTIONARY ROCKET GRAMMAR IS OLD SCHOOL



Freshmen in Mr. Steve Aday's class display their new *Rocket Grammar* books. Teachers in the CHS English department wrote and edited the book. Students appreciate the lessons, but they really like the photos of other CHS students that illustrate the book.

English teachers at this school are unapologetic grammar nerds. They believe that grammar instruction is a key component in teaching students to write.

It's true that some people have an innate ability to craft good sentences without knowing a lick of grammar, but those people are probably voracious readers who pick up grammar rules organically. For the rest of the human race, the study of grammar is important.

Mr. Edward Dodge explains the need for the new *Rocket Grammar* book after standard *Plain English* text went out of print: "We have found [other books] that were good enough, but none of the freshman or sophomore teachers really liked what we found."

Head of the English department Mrs. Gretchen Gowen and former head of the department and now substitute teacher Ms. Jo Schneider had discussed developing their own grammar book for over 20 years, but it wasn't until the teachers met last winter that they decided to get the job done.

"Mrs. Gowen and I wrote the majority of the information," said Mr. Dodge. "We gave assignments to the other English teachers for writing [example] sentences for each lesson. Then Mrs. Gowen did the editing so that the voice would be consistent throughout the book."

*Rocket Grammar* uses photos from Mrs. Gowen's many years as a journalism and yearbook teacher to illustrate the book. Mrs. Jodi Shull, a former art teacher at the school, helped with proofreading and graphic design. Mr. Dodge said, "The grammar book is not there for only teaching grammar, but it also provides snapshots of Catholic High life. Students can see what came before them."

Sophomore Riley Foley appreciates the use of archive photos in the book. "I like knowing some of the people in the book personally, and being able to understand things through the lens of Catholic High School. Last year, we had no references besides our teacher and our notes, but now we have a book that provides a more in-depth look at grammar."

Since none of the students had used the book before, both freshmen and sophomores used the same version of the book this year. Obviously, the teachers have set something in motion that they must update and continue.

"We are already starting work on the sophomore book now," said Mrs. Gowen. "The teachers had the task of marking any errors they found — and they have found a few. We will then be able to revise what we have and create new sets of example sentences for the second book. It will still take a great deal of time, but we know that our basic format is working out."

"When I was editing the book, I kept in mind that not every new teacher is an expert in grammar — yet — and that parents will sometimes need to understand what their sons are puzzling over," said Mrs. Gowen. "There are over 60 years of combined grammar knowledge in that book. Individual teachers will be able to put their own spin on the units and even skip some sections if they think their students have mastered the concepts, but all of our English department's collective understanding of grammar is in that book."

*This story was adapted from an November Rocket Times story written by staff member Essa Kassissieh. Photo by Phillip Zawislak*

## AN UPDATE ON THE EIGHT-PERIOD SCHOOL DAY: A WIN-WIN FOR MANY PEOPLE

When the bell rings at 2:15, students head to their eighth period class. For many, this means they go to a newly-minted elective or to one of their core classes. For athletes in several sports with teacher coaches, the boys head to the field, the gym, or the weight room.

Assistant principal and scheduling guru Mr. Matt Dempsey worked with teachers and coaches and with principal Mr. Steve Straessle for a couple of years to solve a chronic problem. That problem concerned vast amounts of time that coaches and team members need to expend to have a good athletic program. Mr. Dempsey's solution does not cut down the time for practices, but it does allow those involved to go home a little earlier each day since now their practices begin almost an hour earlier than in the past.

Head baseball coach Mr. Bryan Jones professes his love of the new schedule. "Overall, it is

something that has allowed us the ability to get home a lot earlier and get the same amount of practice in, which has really been good. It allows us to focus on some things that, in the past, we didn't have the ability to focus on in August, September, or October.

"Now we have 15-year-old freshmen working out with 18-year-old seniors," said Mr. Jones. "In the past, we separated those guys a lot. Now [because we have more time], the freshmen are being challenged by juniors and seniors ahead of them."

Students also see the benefits for their personal lives as well as for their teams' success. Senior soccer player Edward Schock said, "I think we have a chance to be one of the top teams this season. Practicing every day of the year help us in figuring out how to put it all together early. That will help us be ready when the season finally arrives."



Coach Duncan Diaz runs a drill with *Rocket* football players during eighth period. Most are enthusiastic about the schedule. This article is based on one by associate editor Nicholas Tarini from the December *Rocket Times*. Photo also by Tarini

# THERE'S ALWAYS TIME FOR ART AND MUSIC



- 1) Freshman Finley Miliorn works diligently on a studio art project. 2) A stained-glass pattern emerges along with senior Edward Woodcock's artistic talent. 3) Senior Arden Semans concentrates on his drawing skills in Mrs. Deanna McGill's studio art class. 4) The Band's Christmas concert included a solo of "Greensleeves" by sophomore Logan Rogers. 5) Mr. Matt Golladay rehearses for the Christmas concert with the band's wind ensemble. Mr. Golladay crafts every concert to fit the skills and strengths of the members. For the 2021 Christmas concert, he included several individual performances and even included a vocal solo. 6) Sophomore Cole Carper practices for the concert with the wind ensemble. 7) English class is a perfect place for Ian Draeger to share his musical talent as the juniors in his American literature class talk about meter and rhythm patterns in poetry.

# CHS CALENDAR:

## FEBRUARY 1-MAY 25, 2022

(YOU KNOW THE DRILL: CHECK OTHER SOURCES CLOSER TO THE FOLLOWING DATES)

- ◇ Tuesday, February 1: Varsity basketball at Cabot
- ◇ Friday, February 4: Varsity basketball vs. NLR at CHS
- ◇ **Saturday, February 5: Entrance Exam for Incoming Freshmen** (Check for emails from Mr. Straessle concerning details of this very important test.)
- ◇ Tuesday, February 8: Varsity basketball at Fort Smith
- ◇ Friday, February 11: Varsity basketball vs. NLR at CHS
- ◇ Saturday, February 12: ACT (go to [act.org](http://act.org) for more information)
- ◇ Saturday, February 12: **Winter Formal 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.** (Check school announcements and emails for ticket sale information.)
- ◇ Tuesday, February 15: Varsity basketball vs. LR Southwest at CHS
- ◇ Friday, February 18: Varsity basketball at Conway
- ◇ **Monday, February 22: No School — Presidents Day**
- ◇ Friday, February 25: Varsity basketball at LR Central
- ◇ Wednesday, March 2: All-School Mass for Ash Wednesday
- ◇ Tuesday, March 8: Freshman Class Mass
- ◇ Friday, March 11: End of Third Quarter (watch for test day announcements)
- ◇ Saturday, March 12: SAT (go to [collegeboard.com](http://collegeboard.com) for more information)
- ◇ Monday, March 14: Fourth Quarter begins
- ◇ Tuesday, March 15: Sophomore Class Mass
- ◇ **Monday, March 21 to Friday, March 25: No School — Spring Break**
- ◇ Saturday, April 2: ACT (go to [act.org](http://act.org) for more information)
- ◇ **Saturday, April 2: The Long-Awaited Return of Junktique**
- ◇ Tuesday, April 5: Senior Class Mass
- ◇ Saturday, April 9: Rocket 5K Race
- ◇ Tuesday, April 12: Junior Class Mass
- ◇ Friday, April 15: No School — Good Friday
- ◇ Sunday, April 17: Easter Sunday
- ◇ Friday, April 22 & Saturday, April 23: Msgr. George Tribou Golf Tournament
- ◇ Tuesday, April 26: All-School Mass (last all-school Mass of the year)
- ◇ Thursday, May 5: Senior Class Mass at the Carmelite Monastery
- ◇ Saturday, May 7: SAT
- ◇ Monday, May 16: Breakfast for seniors hosted by Young Alumni Association
- ◇ Tuesday, May 17: Senior exams
- ◇ Wednesday, May 18: Senior exams
- ◇ Thursday, May 19: Senior exams and farewell assembly
- ◇ Friday, May 20: Semester exams for 9th, 10th, and 11th; senior picnic
- ◇ Sunday, May 22: Senior barbecue, program, and yearbook distribution at CHS (seniors only)
- ◇ Monday, May 23: Semester exams for 9th, 10th, and 11th; yearbook distribution during lunch periods\*
- ◇ Monday, May 23: Graduation practice for seniors at 10:00 a.m.; yearbook distribution during lunch periods
- ◇ Tuesday, May 24: Semester exams for 9th, 10th, and 11th; those who haven't received a yearbook by this time should check in the office -- every student and teacher has a reserved yearbook
- ◇ Tuesday, May 24: Graduation practice for seniors (10:00 a.m.)
- ◇ Wednesday, May 25: Junior Work Day
- ◇ Wednesday, May 25: Graduation practice for seniors (10:00 a.m.)
- ◇ **Wednesday, May 25: Class of 2022 Graduation Ceremony 7:30 p.m.**

**\*Yearbook distribution will occur for the seniors at their barbecue on Sunday, May 22. All others will be able to pick up their yearbooks at lunch time on final exam days. Note that every student will receive a yearbook. There is no need to order a yearbook or to bring payment.**

## SCENE AROUND SCHOOL



Senior Jacob Rivera receives a \$2500 scholarship check from the McLarty Automotive Group. Rivera is a top student as well as being a driving force in theatrical efforts at the school and in the community. He has impressed his teachers with his enthusiasm and his positive attitude in everything he does. Photo by Phillip Zawislak



Senior associate editor Charles Timmis goes over Rocket Times articles with staff members. Journalism students hone their writing and editing skills during peer review sessions such as this one.



Brother Richard Sanker and his faithful companion Titus are welcome sights during lunch periods. Titus serves as the unofficial therapy dog for boys and teachers he greets each day. Brother Richard has a more official title of Counselor for all the students.

## PHYSICAL FITNESS NATIONAL COMPETITION MOVES TO CHS

**B**ragging rights for athletic achievement take the form of banners in the CHS gym. Usually, that means a purple and gold state championship announcement. One team has earned ten national championships: our Marine JROTC physical fitness team.

Eight of those awards fall within the years that Sgt. Major Scott Jernigan has acted as the team coach, trainer, and mentor. Many believe that there would have been two more years added to the banner had the competition actually have been held in the last two years.

Sgt. Jernigan and his boys have not given up the work of training for local, state, and national competition, even when the existence of a national competition had been in limbo until recently. This past November, Sgt. Major Jernigan attended a meeting in Quantico, Virginia, where he learned that the site of the national competition would be Fort Indiantown Gap in Pennsylvania. Since then, Sgt. Major has been in talks to move the competition south.

As of this writing, the 2022 Marine Corps Youth Physical Fitness National Championship will be held at Catholic High School on Saturday, May 7. Sgt. Major is working on the details including housing up to 300 athletes and their coaches. Camp Robinson will host the participants in barracks for free or teams may choose to stay at an area hotel. Catholic High participants will have the advantage of avoiding travel time that often cuts into final exams. However, the preparation and logistics will take extensive work.

Mr. Steve Straessle is fully supportive of the competition moving to CHS. "I'm glad our boys get to compete for a national championship on their home field. Our Marine Corps JROTC is the best in the country, and showcasing that fact in person is a great opportunity."

Even though there were no competitions last year, the team made sure to train consistently. "Even last year, we practiced with all intentions for doing nationals," said Sgt. Major Jernigan.

Team members like senior CJ Matthews have found ways to train, even on their own. "I have continued running and doing calisthenics over the summer in preparation," said Matthews. "I would run about 30 miles per week and then do push-ups and pull ups each night."

In October, the team found success in their first competition for over a year, which took place at Mills High School. "We took first, second, third, and fourth place," said Sgt. Major. "I'm pretty confident. I think we're right where we need to be."

Senior Cole Mock said, "It was good to have that adrenaline feeling back. I was pretty satisfied with my performance [at Mills]. I was on the team that got in first place."

Seniors watch over the younger members of the team to make sure of the team's future. Mock said, "I like to share my stories with the younger guys and tell them how my experience was when I was in their position. I have told them what to look for and what to avoid in competitions just as older guys on past teams told me."

Many of the team members have found lifelong lessons as part of this award-winning team. "I have learned that even if it takes hard work, I've just got to get up and go do it if I want to reach my goals," said Mock.



*It's 7:00 a.m. on a normal school day. Physical fitness team members work in pairs to encourage each other and push each other. During competitions, full-fledged Marines will observe their performance and score each event. Sgt. Major Jernigan stresses consistent effort and discipline. Even the team t-shirts are serious. Their motto is "Powered by God. Fueled by desire." Sgt. Major is looking for his sixth consecutive national championship and his ninth win overall. Covid canceled national competition in 2020 and 2021.*

According to Mock, students who are considering joining the physical fitness team and think they are not in the best condition to do so should not worry. "You do not need to be in a strong physical condition [at first]. I remember when I joined that I wasn't. I just worked hard with the team to build that strength."

Sgt. Major Jernigan encourages any boys with an interest to just try physical fitness. He said, "It doesn't matter what physical level you are at. The only way you are going to get stronger or better is by performing the exercises and working out."

Because of his experience and winning record, members of the physical fitness team listen well to Sgt. Major Jernigan's advice. In the only two years the team missed winning the championship under his leadership, they won second place — both years only a few points from first place.

After watching our team win consecutive national championships, other coaches have approached Sgt. Major Jernigan with notebooks in hand to ask about his secret regimen. Sgt. Major smiles as he says to them, "You haven't heard of this new routine called W.O.R.K.?" As the eager coaches write the letters in their notebooks, Sgt. Major explains his magic plan: "You put in the work, you get the results."

*Liftoffnews associate editor Charles Timmis researched this story and contributed to the text and quotations.*