

The Mandolin

St. Francis Catholic High School

February 2022

"Spread the word."

Issue 122

Black History Month at SF

BY SOPHIA HENDRIX '23

With Black History Month here, St. Francis has prepared to celebrate differently from past years. A tremendous amount of work has been put in by the Black Student Union council members to celebrate the beauty of Black culture and excellence.

Throughout February, there are many events and social activities in which the SF community can partake. There was an open movie night on February 17th that all students were encouraged to attend. The showing of the movie *Hidden Figures* tied in with the theme of Black culture and acted as a way for students to celebrate the enormous contribution of Black Americans. Along with the movie night, two guest speaker events will be held on the 24th and 27th. BSU president Dominique Russell '23 is hosting an outside BSU mixer among Jesuit, CB, and St. Francis. The event spotlights a few local Black-owned businesses that Russell discovered herself. Students will receive advice and tips to guide them on running their own businesses as Black businesspeople. One of the larger events was the assembly on February 8th, which honored Black excellence, particularly in the area of performing arts. Non-black students were expected to contribute by simply showing care and interest.

The Celebrating Black Culture assembly brought something St. Francis hadn't seen before. Outside performers visited to bless the community with their beautiful voices and physical art forms. St. Francis also invited the CKM step dance team to perform in the middle of the assembly. The team's performance filled the gym with incredible energy. Following the dance, audience members joined the team and BSU council members for an intense game of



The Black Student Union at St. Francis is working tirelessly to shed light on the beauty of Black culture.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE jeopardy. The jeopardy game quizzed students on their knowledge of Black culture, and the juniors took the win in the end. "I think the assembly made it more palatable for people to learn more about the Black community and things that are important to it," Kaia Hadid '24.

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Black History Month at SF (cont.)

St. Francis media is also working to support and document Black History Month. Students can expect weekly Instagram posts honoring Black women in history. Educational posts are crucial for St. Francis because the student body has the chance to learn about important Black figures that meaningfully contributed to society. Troubie TV is scheduled to record segments promoting upcoming events, along with a documentary to be released at the beginning of March.

Aside from planned events, St. Francis BSU council members say that this month should honor Black culture and people in a positive light; however, this doesn't exclude opportunities to learn and reflect. "The silencing of Black voices is too prominent in the media and at St. Francis, [so] we are putting a stop to it," says Selah Burnley '25. The goal is to acknowledge the struggles that Black people have experienced while also raising their voices to speak about their experiences and highlight

Black Americans both on and off this campus. The silencing of Black voices in the current day, and even for Black students at St. Francis, causes them to feel less than their white peers. There are also qualities that young Black women have and are shunned for, like their confidence or their hair, that should be celebrated this month. There is much to celebrate in Black culture, including Black art, music, traditions, food, fashion, and culture.

It is hoped that this year's Black History Month at St. Francis exhibits extensive growth from years past. Although non-Black students will never understand the exact struggle Black students have of attending a predominantly white school, they can put in the effort to commit to the school's development and contribute to creating a sense of inclusivity on campus. There's much change to be made, and this year's Black History Month is the time when students can take action to encourage that change.

Respect for Marriage Act Signed Into Law

BY HAYLEY LABIA '23

President Biden signed the Respect for Marriage Act into law on December 13, 2022, mandating federal recognition for same-sex marriages and displaying his own personal evolution toward embracing LGBTQ+ rights over the course of his political career. The president spoke before a crowd of thousands gathered to celebrate on the South Lawn.

This landmark legislation officially erases the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman. The new law prohibits states from denying the validity of out-of-state marriages based on sex, race, or ethnicity. Although it does not guarantee the right to marry, it makes it so that other states have to recognize same-sex marriages across state lines and that same-sex couples are entitled to the same federal benefits as any



The Respect for Marriage act requires all US states to recognize the validity of same-sex and interracial marriage.

PHOTO COURTESY OF GOOGLE

Respect for Marriage Act Signed Into Law (cont.)

other married couple, such as Social Security survivor benefits.

The push for the Respect for Marriage Act was influenced by the Supreme Court overturning *Roe v. Wade*, in which Justice Clarence Thomas raised the possibility of using the same logic to reconsider decisions protecting marriage equality and contraception rights. Opponents of the legislation argued that it would undermine family values in the United States and restrict the religious freedoms of people who do not believe that same-sex marriage is moral. But proponents of the new law insisted that Congress needed to provide a law to fall back on in the instance that a future Supreme Court overturns the 2015 court ruling in *Obergefell v. Hodges*, which says that all states must recognize the marriages of same-sex couples just as they would marriages between a man and a woman.

The signing ceremony was also monumental for the president since it demonstrated Biden's reformed views on LGBTQ+ equality. He was raised in a time when the majority of the country was less tolerant of people's sexual orientations, and his policy choices in the Senate reflected those times.



President Biden and first lady Jill Biden walk through the Cross Hall of the White House lit with rainbow colors following a Pride Month event in the East Room last year.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NPR

As a senator in 1996, he voted for the Defense of Marriage Act and wavered on letting gay men and lesbians serve in the military. Furthermore, Biden supported a measure that restricted how homosexuality was taught in schools, one of many defeats for the equality movement. However, the president's views have shifted, much like the country's.

The U.S. continues to have ideological divisions, but there are now new majorities that express support for societal and political norms that were different a generation ago. In 2004, 42% of Americans said they were in support of same-sex marriage, according to Gallup. But today, polls show a change in public opinion across the political spectrum in the past decade, with nearly 70 percent of Americans now saying they support the right of same-sex marriage, with all the rights that heterosexual couples have under the law.

The passage of the bill was a remarkable show of bipartisanship in Congress, where 61 senators and 258 House members voted to send the Respect for Marriage Act to Mr. Biden's desk for his signature.

By the time that happened, there was no doubt that the president would sign it. It was a momentous occasion, especially for one of the nation's most prominent Catholic politicians.

SOURCES:

The New York Times

NPR

Gallup

Biden & Trump Classified Documents

BY JESS SAMI '23

President Biden is being faced with a White House investigation following the discovery of classified documents at multiple residences. The reports of these documents were first brought to light on January 9, 2023, where they were found in a box in a locked closet at the Penn Biden Center in Washington, D.C. However, these classified documents were initially found and immediately turned over on November 2, 2022, less than a week before the midterm elections. According to Richard Stauber, the special counsel to the president, the classified documents appeared to be Obama-era documents when Biden acted as vice president. Three days after this news broke, President Biden's lawyers found additional classified documents at his residence in Wilmington, Delaware. At this time, another FBI search into Biden's beach house in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, has yielded no classified documents.



Classified documents were found at President Biden's former office and his Wilmington, Delaware, home.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

Many Democrats and Republicans are comparing this outbreak of classified documents to the August 8, 2022 FBI search of former President Trump's Mar-a-Lago home in Palm Beach, Florida. The investigation into Trump was founded by violations of three federal criminal statutes: violations of the Espionage Act, destroying or concealing records, and illegal removal or destruction of federal government

records. The search found over 100 classified documents, some classified at the highest levels, including intelligence that could reveal how and from whom the United States acquires information from other countries. This is where the comparisons begin. President Biden has cooperated with the authorities, inviting them to search his home, while former President Trump defied efforts to recover documents even after being subpoenaed, prompting a judge to issue a search warrant. No items found in the Biden search have been torn apart or moved out from one place to another, and none of Biden's documents were highly classified on need-to-know special access programs.

However, this search has sparked accusations of hypocrisy towards President Biden. These cases are similar enough that as a practical matter Democrats can no longer use the issue against former President Trump politically, and investigators may have a harder time prosecuting him criminally. Democratic allies are increasingly frustrated by a White House that hid the discovery of secret documents from the public for two months and, even once it was reported, provided only partial information, then declared the search complete only to have more papers turn up. Americans are still separating Biden's conduct from Trump, but most think the matter deserves scrutiny. An ABC News/Ipsos poll showed that 77% of Americans said Trump handled classified documents inappropriately while 64% said the same about Biden. The public perception that more and more government officials are hiding things from the public is increasing, and will only be fueled by the latest discovery of classified documents at the Indiana home of former Vice President Mike Pence. Regardless of political party, there is an unfortunate precedent forming in the American public's distrust of government.

SOURCES: *The New York Times, NPR, NBC, OPB, Bloomberg Government, The Center for American Progress*

Kevin McCarthy, Speaker of the House

BY STEPHANIE OLVIDO '25

Just two years after the insurrection at the Capitol, history was made on January 6th once again. Friday, January 6th, marked the 15th round of voting for the Speaker of the House—no speaker designate had needed more than one ballot to secure the position since 1923. Fortunately, 15 was the lucky number, as California Republican Kevin McCarthy was elected as Speaker of the House in the early morning of January 7th.

A native from Bakersfield, McCarthy's leadership began when he started his own deli business at 21. As for his political career, McCarthy was first elected as a California Representative in 2006, later rising to become the Majority Leader of the House in 2014 and House Republican Leader in 2018. As the Majority Leader, McCarthy was essentially the second-in-command to former Speaker of the House, John Andrew Boehner. And as the House Republican Leader, McCarthy was the voice of his party and represented them on the House floor. So what's next for the California Republican?

What is the Speaker of the House?

The Speaker of the House has many jobs, from being the spokesperson for the majority party, managing business on the House floor, and being second-in-line to succeed the President. Speakers are elected at the beginning of the new Congress. The Speaker of the House also manages and structures House debates, adhering to strict rules and procedures to ensure that everything goes smoothly. Unfortunately, this did not happen during this year's speaker elections.

The 2023 House Speaker Vote

McCarthy's main struggle to win Speaker of the House was internal conflict, as he fended off opposition from hardline conservatives throughout the entire speaker election. The most tense and televised moments occurred towards the end of the voting process, as most

Republicans anticipated McCarthy to win in the 14th round of voting, in which he did not. McCarthy had already begun making concessions and promises to more conservative Republicans, concerning moderate Republicans in the process, yet was a major reason in why he won the election.



Kevin McCarthy watches and listens as a fourth round of voting for a new Speaker of the House fails to elect him Speaker on the second day of the 118th Congress at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 4, 2023.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PBS

In between the 14th and 15th round of voting, one Republican voted “present” instead of an actual nominee, former President Donald Trump was phoned, and a physical altercation was narrowly avoided. By the end of the speaker election, one thing had become clear: the deep divisions within the Republican party manifest not only in major decisions but will persist throughout McCarthy's career as Speaker.

McCarthy's win means many different things. Some have noted that McCarthy emerges as a weak speaker by conceding to his opposition, while others argue that he is a “survivor” of the longest speaker's vote since the early 20th century. Critics say that the 118th Congress' disorganized start represents just one of the many difficulties Republicans face with new control in the House, almost mirroring former Republican Speaker John Boehner's issues that resulted in his early retirement. However, time can only tell how Kevin McCarthy's leadership will unfold.

SOURCES: PBS, CNN, *The New York Times*, history.house.gov, kevinmccarthy.house.gov

Pope Benedict Has Died

BY JESS SAMI '23

Pope Benedict XVI has passed away. At age 95, his death occurred on December 31, 2022, hours before the mark of a new year. This news came just a few days after Pope Francis called the faithful to pray for Pope Benedict, as his health had been deteriorating for quite some time.

Pope Benedict was known as a highly compelling voice in the Catholic Church for decades, starting from his election to the position in April of 2005. He was the first pontiff in 600 years to resign from his position as the head of the Church rather than hold the position for life, leaving his title as pope in February of 2013. The Pope resigned his position as a result of his advanced age. In his farewell address, Pope Benedict affirmed humbly that he was "simply a pilgrim beginning the last leg of his pilgrimage on this Earth." He also promised he was "withdrawing into prayer" and would remain "hidden" from the world. However, the former pope continued to speak out about controversial issues regarding the Church long after his resignation, sparking tension in the Catholic Church.

As with all influential and authoritative people's deaths comes a look into their legacy spanning over many years. Let's take a look into some of the defining moments of Pope Benedict's life.

Prior to his election as pope, Benedict was known as Joseph Ratzinger, defined by his decades-long work running the Vatican's Influential Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF). This office was responsible for stating and policing Church doctrine, a highly important position that affects the teachings of the Catholic Church and their incorporation into modern society. Pope Benedict's biographer, David Gibson, stated "His twenty-four years at the CDF were far more influential than his tenure as pope." Some of his most popular stances included his direct support for the

fundamental principles of the Church, including the Church's stance on homosexuality. In a recent interview with The Associated Press, Pope Francis stated that "Being homosexual isn't a crime" in a response to worldwide jurisdictions that criminalize consensual same-sex relationships.

Pope Benedict was widely known as far more conservative as opposed to the current pope, Pope Francis. Benedict focused on bringing the Church "back to its basics," relying on foundational theological documents and teachings to maintain a strict interpretation of the Catholic faith. At the time of his election as pope, the Church was facing (and still is) a growing crisis in handling sexual abuse allegations against priests, threatening the Church's moral standing around the world. From 2004-2014, the Vatican excommunicated 848 priests who raped or molested children and sanctioned another 2,572 with lesser penalties, according to the Church. In some cases, Benedict acted accordingly to punish known abusers in the Catholic Church; however, he was criticized for his inability to act in several other cases. In 2010, The New York Times reported that several church officials including Benedict did not act in the case of a Wisconsin priest accused of molesting up to 200 boys. 12 years later, a Church-commissioned report into abuse by Catholic clergy found that Benedict had been informed of four cases of sexual abuse involving minors - including two that had taken place while he was in office - but failed to act.

Regardless of his controversial legacy, Pope Benedict XVI will always be remembered as a strong Catholic theologian who upheld the teachings of the Church. According to scholars, based on his catecheses, encyclicals on central aspects of the faith, and biographies he could one day be declared a doctor of the Church. Rest in peace, Pope Benedict.

SOURCES: CNN, Rome Reports, *The Guardian*

Nurse's Strike in UK

BY STELLA DAVENPORT '25

British nurses and government are at a standstill as both parties fail to come to an agreement regarding compensation for healthcare workers. Leaders from the Royal College of Nursing, the largest nursing trade union in the U.K., met with British authorities to discuss pay increases. The government refused to increase pay over 4%, despite claiming a certain 6.5% pay increase on the Conservative Party's website. Inflation increased by over 10% in December. Nurses are effectively naming this plan as a pay decrease.

This event falls parallel to an international inflation crisis. In the United States, inflation in the consumer sector has risen by 6.8%, and by 9.1% in the housing market. Despite these conditions, nationwide minimum wage is yet to see an increase, making its value (\$7.25) the lowest it has been since 1956. In the U.K., the minimum wage for the lowest-earning age range reaches the low of \$4.20.



British nurses launch a historic strike in an effort to achieve higher pay.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CNN

career in the Conservative Party and served as Chief of Staff under former Prime Minister Boris Johnson. The Conservative Party stands to increase the budget for the NHS (National Health Service) by 33.9 billion British pounds (approximately 41.9 billion U.S. dollars) during 2023 and 2024; however, according to the Party's website, this money will go into building new hospitals and revamping existing ones.

Emergency patients will continue to be treated during strike periods; however, non-emergency patients will face delays in their care due to the strike. Up to 25% of British hospitals have been affected by striking workers. The scale of the situation is massive, and however disheartened British healthcare workers may be, their resolve will not waver. If no resolution can be met before February 1st, workers such as teachers, train drivers, and social workers will follow in the nurse's footsteps. In the face of such strength, one truth is undeniable: there is strength in numbers.

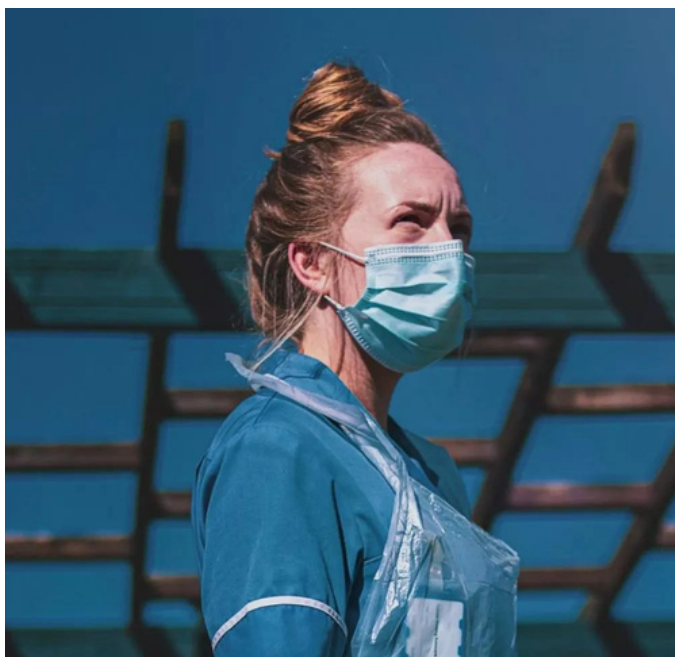


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BIG ISSUE

Striking nurses, who are largely represented by the Labour Party, have critiqued the government's conservatism for failing to meet their demands. Steve Barclay, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, forged a

The Golden Globe Awards

BY CARINA CONSOLINI '23

January 10th, 2023 marked the 80th annual Golden Globe Awards. This award ceremony is presented by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, or HFPA for short, and began in 1944. The Golden Globe Awards focuses on the top movies, television, directors, and actors of the year, and awards are given for various categories. The ceremony has gained tremendous popularity over time, and has become a Hollywood tradition as people gathered yet again to see who would walk away with this year's Golden Globe trophies.

The "Best Picture" category involves multiple genres and many nominated films. The award for the Best Drama Motion Picture went to *The Fablemans* directed by Steven Spielberg who also won the Director of a Motion Picture Award from his work on the film. *Elvis* had also been nominated for the category, and while it didn't win, actor Austin Butler won Best Actor in a Motion Picture Drama for his lead role in the film. Similarly this happened with *Tár* as Cate Blanchett won the same award in the actress category.

The Banshees of Inisherin, directed by Martin McDonagh left the ceremony with an impressive three Golden Globes. The film won the Best Picture Award for a Musical/Comedy, McDonagh won for Best Motion Picture Screenplay, and actor Colin Farrell won Best Actor for a Motion Picture Musical/Comedy for his role in the film. *Everything Everywhere All at Once* was a nominee for the same category, and while the movie itself did not win the award actress Michelle Yeoh won Best Actress for a Motion Picture Musical/Comedy and Ke Huy Quan won Best Supporting Actor for a Motion Picture for their roles in the film. Justin Hurwitz won Best Motion Picture Score for his compositions in *Babylon*.

Best Animated Picture was awarded to *Guillermo del Toro's Pinocchio*, directed and written by Guillermo del Toro.

Argentina, 1985 directed by Santiago Mitre won Best Picture in a Non-English Language. *RRR* directed by S.S. Rajamouli was also nominated but still won Best Song in a Motion Picture for song "Naatu Naatu" by S.S. Rajamouli and M.M. Keeravaani.

Likewise, television series across many platforms also competed for awards. The HBO original *House of the Dragon* won as the Best Drama Series. *Ozark's* Julia Garner also won Best Supporting Actress in the category.

Abbott Elementary took home multiple awards, including Best Musical/Comedy Series. From the series, Quinta Brunson and Tyler James Williams won Best Television Actress in a Musical/Comedy Series and Best Supporting Actor in a Television Series.

The award for Best Limited Series, Anthology Series, or Television Motion Picture went to another HBO original, *The White Lotus*, whose Jennifer Coolidge also won Best Supporting Actress in a Television Limited Series/Motion Picture. The other nominated shows in the category included actors who won awards, such as *Blackbird's* Paul Walter Hauser for Supporting Actor, *Dahmer - Monster: The Jeffrey Dahmer Story's* Evan Peters for Best Actor, *The Dropout's* Amanda Seyfried for Best Actress, all within the category.

Other award winners whose overall films or series were not nominees included Zendaya for Best Television Actress in a Drama Series, Angela Bassett for Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture, and Kevin Costner for Best Television Actor in a Drama Series.

The 80th annual Golden Globe Awards recognized many of this year's top films, series, actors, directors, and more. The event once again drew in film and television fans alike to witness the results. Still, one question remains: who's winning an Oscar?

SOURCE:

The Golden Globe Awards

New Year's Resolutions

BY CARINA CONSOLINI '23

For some people, it's a tradition to start off the New Year with a personal resolution. These can range from goals, challenges, to just about anything. With the start of 2023, students were asked about their own New Year's resolutions and they had a variety of unique responses. Below are some of these resolutions shared by St. Francis students:



PHOTO COURTESY OF HOLLYWOOD LIFE

What's your New Year's Resolution?

- Do yoga, and sing at an open mic!
- Be on time more
- Write down at least one thing every day that made me happy
- My New Year's resolution is to get more people to order the Sofritas at Chipotle. They're both good for you, and it would make the employees happy as they're easier to make than either the steak or chicken!
- Get at least 7 hours of sleep ;)
- To rip an apple apart with my bare hands
- Drink more water
- Love myself and others
- Have better posture because mine stinks right now ;)
- Beat my high score for my Goodreads Reading Challenge. 2023 BABY
- To be nicer to my friends and family
- To be more positive
- To be safe, happy, and healthy!
- To stress myself out less and to do more of what makes me happy
- Stay in touch better with outside-of-school friends ;)
- Get better with my artistic skills
- My new year's resolution is to save money for something special!
- To be more present
- To ace all my classes, and be more social

The Origins of Valentine's Day

BY SAM MARSEE '23

What's with all of the hearts, flowers, and romance every February 14th? To put it simply, we don't know the origins of Valentine's Day. For starters, it could be in relation to the Catholic Church's recognition of the three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus. One legend has it that Valentine was a priest in third-century Rome who lived in an empire in which marriage was banned for all young men. Seeing the injustice in this, Valentine continued to bless the marriages of young couples in secret. According to a different legend, an imprisoned Valentine sent the first "valentine" to a young woman who visited him in jail, supposedly his jailor's daughter. He signed the letter "from your Valentine," coining the popular phrase that we still use to this day.

them more fertile in the coming year. Later that day, they would put their names into an urn in the city, with a bachelor choosing a name from an urn to be paired with his chosen woman for that year – these couplings often ended in marriage. While Lupercalia became outlawed by Pope Gelasius with the rise of Catholicism on February 14th, it wasn't until much later in the Middle Ages that this day became associated with love.

Important aspects and symbols of Valentine's Day have histories dating from long ago too. Cupid, for example, who inspires pop culture and fills the stores around us this time of year, has an interesting backstory. The Roman god Cupid, also called Eros, is the Greek god of love, though his parents are often contested as either the son of Nyx and Erebus or Aphrodite and



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAYS OF THE YEAR

One of the most common theories to the origins of Valentine's Day is that it may be tied to Lupercalia, an ancient festival of fertility dedicated to Faunus, the Roman god of agriculture, and the Roman founders Romulus and Remus. Lupercalia consisted of a goat and dog sacrifice by priests, performed in a sacred cave. Young Roman women were welcomed to touch the goat's hides, believing it would make

Ares. According to poets, he was a handsome immortal who used golden arrows to incite love in others. It wasn't until the Hellenistic period that he became portrayed as the mischievous, chubby child that we think of today. Birds are also important on Valentine's Day, their origin stemming from their supposed mating season. The avian mating season was thought to have been mid-February, making birds a symbol of this romantic holiday.

Kate's Corner: February Book Review

BY KATE COCKERTON '23

Title: *Anxious People*

Author: Fredrik Backman

Pages: 336

Genre: fiction, humor

Overall Rating: 7/10

Description (courtesy of Goodreads): “Viewing an apartment normally doesn’t turn into a life-or-death situation, but this particular open house becomes just that when a failed bank robber bursts in and takes everyone in the apartment hostage. As the pressure mounts, the eight strangers begin slowly opening up to one another and reveal long-hidden truths.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE STANFORD DAILY

Welcome to the first edition of Kate's Corner! This month I'll be reviewing *Anxious People* by Fredrik Backman, originally published in 2019. I'll try to keep it as spoiler-free as possible, but minor details may come up. It was recommended to me by Ms. Kirstien, who originally heard about the book from her student, Abby Connolly '22.

I was pleasantly surprised with this novel, especially since I usually don't read books of this genre. It starts off a bit somber as the narrator introduces some of the central topics: the business of modern life, living up to expectations, and the lengths we go to for those we love. Then the story begins, and we learn that there was a failed bank robbery. The apartment

the robber fled to was covered in blood when the police entered, but they can't find the bank robber. The chapters are all rather short--some only a page long--since the timeline changes from present day to flashbacks to police reports and back again. Fortunately it's not too confusing, and it's pretty easy to tell when the perspective shifts.

In terms of plot, this book is probably an 8 out of 10. It's compelling, there's plenty of twists, and it subverts your expectations in several places. I'm taking off points for some painfully stupid decisions the characters make; otherwise, the story is great. I ended up reading it within a week or so, which is faster than usual for me. The book throws you into the middle of the action, and pieces of the story are revealed as the novel progresses. I enjoyed the narration style since it reminded me a lot of Kurt Vonnegut, but without the graphic descriptions of war. One important thing to note is that the book contains descriptions of suicide and suicidal thoughts. It's instrumental to the plot so it doesn't feel like the author was trying to discuss mental health just to be trendy, but it is something to be aware of before reading.

Anxious People is very much a character-driven story; the plot is formed around the characters rather than vice versa. Every person in the story has more to them than you'd expect, which is exactly what happens in real life. They all have their own stories within the larger context of the novel, filled with hopes and dreams and fears. None of the characters go to the apartment viewing expecting to be held hostage, but it happens anyway. None of them expect to open up to each other and discover how intertwined their lives are, but life is funny that way.

Speaking of funny, I'll be honest: it felt like my grandpa was telling me some of the jokes, which was odd considering that the author was only in his late thirties when he wrote it. That's not my personal brand of humor, but I suppose each reader will have a different opinion. There

Kate's Corner: February Book Review (cont.)

BY KATE COCKERTON '23

weren't any times when I really laughed out loud, but the many wise comments certainly entertained me.

Perhaps now you're asking, "Kate, you said this book has humor, so is it actually funny?" The short answer is "yes." The long answer is "not always," but that ends up working to its advantage. *Anxious People* is all about blending heart and humor to create one clever, insightful story. The comedy keeps the tone upbeat and hopeful while the sincerity gives the book a deeper meaning. I didn't expect to be emotionally moved by a story about a bunch of anxious people (see what I did there?) being held captive in an apartment, yet I found myself rooting for them all to have a happy ending.

It quickly becomes clear that this book is both completely absurd and entirely plausible at the same time. The narrator even breaks the fourth wall to acknowledge it. I was initially intrigued, then annoyed, but by the end I felt that it could be no other way. The chain of events was highly coincidental, but that makes sense for a novel about how we all impact each other. There were times when I felt everything was a bit too ridiculous for my taste, but the story still raises several important questions. How do we determine if someone deserves a second chance? Do compassion and empathy really make a difference in a consumerist society? And why does "Stockholmer" have so many different meanings?

Anxious People tells a poignant tale about the many unexpected ways in which our lives overlap and how strangers can unite. From the very first page the narrator tells the reader, "This story is about a lot of things, but mostly about idiots." It's true--these people are idiots, but really, they're no more idiotic than you or I.

So if you're curious about *Anxious People*, swing by your local library and pick up a copy! Special thanks to Ms. Kirstien for recommending it, and shoutout to Maddy Villere '23 and Carina

Consolini '23 for reading it with me. See you in the next edition of Kate's Corner!

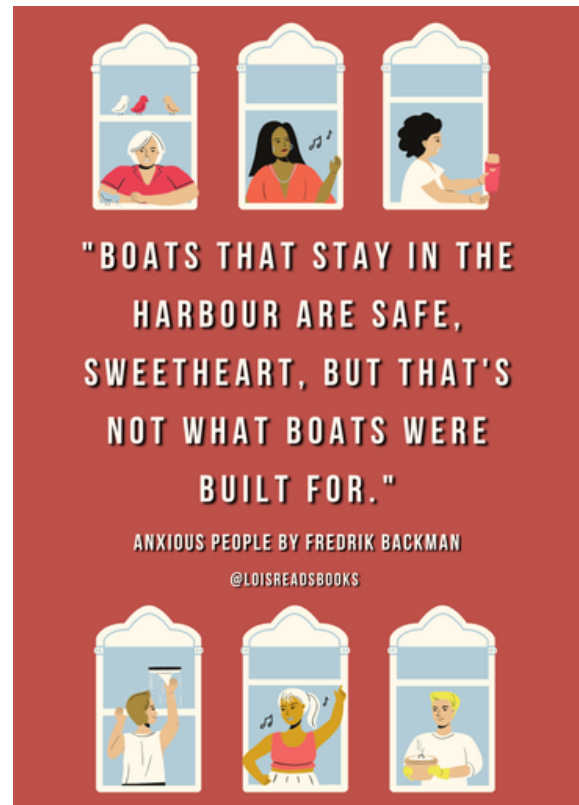


PHOTO COURTESY OF LOIS READS BOOKS



PHOTO COURTESY OF GOODREADS

Sparkle Sweetheart Cookies

BY HAYLEY LABIA '23

Prep: 1 hour

Cook: 12 minutes

Total: 1.5 hours

Yield: 32 cookies

Ingredients:

- 3 cups (375g) of all-purpose flour
- 1 and 1/2 teaspoons of baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 1 cup (2 sticks; 240g) of unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 2 ounces (56g) of cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 cup (200g) of granulated sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons of pure vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon of almond extract (optional)
- 3/4 cup (150g) of sanding sugar, pink and red or assorted colors
- 32 chocolate hearts, unwrapped

Cookie Instructions:

1. Use a microwave-safe mixing bowl to mix the chocolate and butter. Boil water in a small saucepan and place a small bowl on top of the pan. Add the chocolate and butter into the small bowl. Stir constantly until melted and smooth.
2. In a large bowl, use a hand-held or stand mixer fitted with a paddle attachment and beat the butter and cream cheese together on high speed until relatively smooth (about 2 minutes). Add the granulated sugar and beat until combined and creamy. Add the egg, vanilla extract, and almond extract and beat on high speed until combined (about 1 minute). Scrape down the sides and bottom of the bowl as needed to combine.
3. Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients and mix on low speed until combined. The dough should be thick. Cover dough tightly with aluminum foil or plastic wrap and chill for at least 30-60 minutes and up to 3-4 days. If chilling for more than 2-3 hours, allow the dough to sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes before rolling and baking.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SALLY'S BAKING RECIPES

4. Preheat oven to 350°F (177°C). Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats. Set aside.
5. Pour sanding sugar in a bowl or, if using multiple colors, a few separate bowls. Roll balls of cookie dough (about 1 tablespoon of dough per cookie) then roll each ball in the sanding sugar to coat.
6. Place each dough ball 2 inches apart on the baking sheets. Using the back of a measuring cup or drinking glass, gently press down on each dough ball to slightly flatten. Bake the cookies for 12-13 minutes or until very lightly browned on the edges.
7. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on the baking sheets for 5 minutes. Press a chocolate heart into each cookie and quickly stick the baking sheet in the freezer or fridge so the warm cookie does not completely melt the chocolate heart. Let the chocolate set (about 15 minutes) on the cookies in the freezer/refrigerator.
8. Cookies will stay fresh covered at room temperature for 1 week.

SOURCE:

Sally's Baking Recipes

Valentine's Day Word Search

BY KATE COCKERTON '23

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

Arrow	Friends
Balloons	Gift
Bouquet	Heart
Candy	Hugs
Card	Love
Chocolate	Red
Cupid	Roses
Family	Valentine
February	