

# THE AUGUSTINIAN

“Tolle Lege”

Issue 1 September 26, 2024 St. Augustine High School

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## New Teachers Join the Brotherhood

By Henry Barwick ('26)  
STAFF WRITER

The new school year always brings along a few new teachers, and this year is no different. Saints has three new teachers joining us this year: Mr. Brandon Secrest, Mr. Bill Sullivan, and Mr. Matt Haniger.

Mr. Secrest teaches Art I: Drawing, Art II: Painting, AP Drawing, and AP Art & Design. He is originally from Fullerton, which is just outside of Anaheim. After high school, Mr. Secrest knew he either wanted to pursue the arts or join the Navy. He ended up going to the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, where he received his Bachelor's Degree in English. He was in the Navy for about a decade, where he became a Navy SEAL. During his time as a SEAL, he was deployed to every country in the Middle East, with the exceptions of Iran and Yemen.

After retiring from the Navy, Mr. Secrest lived in Cleveland, Ohio, where he followed his passion for art by attending the Cleveland Institute of Art. There, he received his bachelor's degree

of Fine Arts. He then moved to San Diego where he earned his Master of Fine Arts degree at SDSU.

Before Mr. Secrest came to Saints, he taught Woodworking, Sculpture, and Furniture Design classes at SDSU. He decided to come to Saints because it gives him the opportunity to essentially run his own program, instead of, as he says, “being a cog in a machine” at SDSU. Teaching at the high school level lets him invest more in each student than he could at the collegiate level.

Mr. Secrest said he wanted to be a teacher because many students learn in different ways, and he wanted to assist them in their learning process. In doing this, his own teaching process would continuously improve over time. In addition, teaching allows him to pass on his expertise to others and he enjoys, “being able to articulate how to succeed in artistic endeavors.”

On a more personal note, Mr. Secrest enjoys baseball, but he says that he especially enjoys listening to the sound of the environment in a baseball stadium.

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Mr. Secrest (left), Mr. Sullivan (center), and Mr. Haniger (right) proudly sport their beanies.  
Sebastain Rodriguez '27

## Saints Sports Fall into Stride

By Ben Bayona ('27)  
CONTRIBUTOR

By Cole Dolin ('27)  
CONTRIBUTOR

By Sebastian Lutteroth ('28)  
CONTRIBUTOR

### Beach Volleyball

Since its debut, the Saints beach volleyball team has established and maintained a strong presence on the court. With the beginning of a new season, the team is ready to prove their dominance once more.

The varsity team consists of many talented, intelligent, and respected Saintsmen. The team is led by several varsity veterans, including Luke O'Leary, Noah Heuring, and Oliver Fendley. Additionally, the roster gained Noah Pabarcus and Hugo Hunt, two freshmen who will likely set a precedent for the next generation of Saints beach volleyball athletes.

“I see a lot of experience in our players, which is great,” Coach Theilacker said. “They're showcasing that experience to a lot of our younger players.”

Currently, the team boasts an undefeated record of 5-0, beating out the likes of Clairemont, Poway, and La Jolla. The latter two schools, according to Coach Theilacker, are “powerhouses in the volleyball world here in San Diego.”

The coaches and players set high standards for themselves in their pursuit of victory in their field. Their vigorous yet exciting training on the beautiful beaches of San Diego conditions the athletes to reach their highest potential while competing.



Football shows off their hands.

“It looks like [this] might be our best year we've ever had in beach volleyball,” said Coach Janene Palafox, the head coach of the program.

She hopes her players will display a high level of class and athleticism throughout the season. We should support our fellow Saintsmen in reaching the success that they strive for.

### Football

With the anticipation overwhelming, Saints football is finally back! After a nearly ten-month break from official games and much work over the summer to get in season-ready shape, the Saintsmen have once again taken the field. Last season, Saints had one of its most successful years ever, going 10-3 and winning a San Diego Section Division 1 title.

Over the offseason, Saints football

Jameson Grohman ('26)

welcomed a new coach, Ron Caragher. He was the head coach at the University of San Diego and San Jose State. He has had many accomplishments during his long coaching career, including being awarded Pioneer Football League coach of the year in 2011.

In addition to Coach Caragher, the football team's coaching staff has had a huge overhaul, with people like Coach Matt Haniger (See new teachers on p1) and many others coming in to strengthen the varsity squad.

With the valuable additions of both Coach Caragher and a new, younger team during the offseason, the Saints football team has a chance to win a title once again. The team has played four games up to the time of print, unfortunately all of them yielding losses. So far, the Saintsmen have

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## AP Tests Go Digital

By James Burrell ('26)  
STAFF WRITER

The days of hand cramps and physical fatigue caused by mid-May AP exams are over. This year, a majority of the Advanced Placement tests, 28 in total, are transitioning from paper to a screen.

The College Board officially stated that this change is “to ensure the continued security of AP exams.” Essentially, the College Board has faced numerous quality-control problems with sending out thousands of paper exams, such as people receiving tests too early or tampering with them. The company has found it easier to push the APs over to a digital medium in hopes of avoiding the issues.

So, what does this mean for you as a student? While some AP tests will not be affected (don't worry, Microsoft Paint won't be used on AP Art exams), many academic-focused subjects, including all history courses, all math courses, and many English courses, will take place at least partially on a computer or another electronic device.

On test day, you'll most likely do multiple-choice questions on a device. The writing portions of some AP tests will still be on paper, but this does not include AP English exams.

This year is the first that the College Board is using digital APs, so the format is currently unknown. It's assumed that they will be similar to the digital SATs, so those tests will probably serve as an effective preview for the May exams. Hopefully, the Saints WiFi works the day of the tests, or else we'll be in big trouble.

# Debating the Fate of America

Former President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris met for the first time on the debate stage, covering a large swath of topics. Here's what you need to know.



Trump (left) and Harris (right) shake hands before the debate.



By Alex Paz y Puente ('26)  
CONTRIBUTOR

Tuesday, September 10th saw the latest installment to the fiery presidential race, with the highly-awaited debate between Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump. The debate was hosted by ABC news, whose neutrality was crucial.

The rules to the debate stipulated that each candidate was allowed only two minutes to answer each question, and one minute for follow-up responses. No notes were allowed during the debate, and it was conducted without a live audience.

This debate was very important not only because it was an opportunity for Americans to acquaint themselves with the Democratic nominee after President Biden removed his name from the race, but also because this was the first in-person interaction between the two candidates.

For those who aren't familiar with the vice president, Kamala Harris is a Democrat who advocates for criminal justice, equality, and climate change action.

Former President Donald Trump, the Republican nominee is campaigning on the slogan "Make America Great Again," Trump emphasizes foreign policy, immigration issues, and the economic problems of the country.

In the spirit of focusing on the issues deemed most important by voters, the debate questions covered a large variety of topics, including the economy, immigration, and international affairs.

Regarding the economy, the two candidates espoused differing views. Harris addressed the national housing shortage and the drastic increase in costs of living for the average American. She also explained her plans regarding tax cuts for young families and small businesses.

Conversely, Trump's response was to repeat what he did four years ago during his presidency, a plan centered around tariffs. He described how inflation during his four-year term was lower than what it is today, and how he built the "greatest

economy" the nation has ever seen.

Trump often assailed the Biden-Harris administration for its handling of the immigration issue in the United States, stating that they allowed drug dealers, child traffickers, and criminals to enter the country without any repercussions.

He went on to describe how unfiltered immigration has led to increases in crime and "dog-eating," and he claims that the Democrats destroyed the nation through their liberal immigration policies.

Harris responded that they must "address the needs of the American people" rather than try to divide the nation, and she attacked Trump's previous wrong-doings and his "tired old playbook."

A major debate arose over the war in Ukraine, especially after Trump answered that he just wanted the war to end without specifying what side he would advocate for. He repeated that he would have the war ended before entering office by speaking to both President Zelensky and President Putin to negotiate a peace treaty.

He also argued that the Biden-Harris administration was weak in preventing the war. He asserted that if he had been president, the war would never have started in the first place.

Harris responded by saying, "Trump would have this war ended within 24 hours because he would just give it up." She emphasized her work to gather support for Ukraine, and she continually stated that other world leaders, including Putin, had no respect for Trump.

Later in the debate, Harris said that former president Donald Trump would "terminate the constitution" and "weaponize the Department of Justice to go against his political opponents." To this, Trump retorted that the Biden administration had weaponized the FBI to investigate him in the past.

As is the case in modern politics, this debate featured many insults but not many answers. It did, however, reflect the deep divisions within our electorate as well as its deeply held concerns for the future of our nation.

# Mexico: Not So Libre?



By Jose Manuel Prado Gonzalez ('27)  
CONTRIBUTOR

Mexico's judicial branch is facing radical and fundamental reform. The country's system of checks and balances is being threatened by a change to the judicial system that will grant the other branches of government much more power.

Based on vague accusations that the judicial branch was inefficient, corrupt, and elitist, President López Obrador proposed a complete overhaul of the system on February 5, 2024.

In doing so, the legislative and executive branches hope to gain corruptive amounts of power over the nation's treasury.

To understand this complex issue, one must first understand the concept of checks and balances.

Checks and balances are what prevent any person or governmental branch from gaining too much power. They basically split the power the government has into three parties: the executive branch (the president), the legislative branch (Congress), and the judicial branch (the Supreme Court, judges, lawyers, us, etc.).

In Mexico, there has been an ongoing issue where the legislative and executive powers attempt to undermine the judicial branch to gain more control. The judicial reforms would allow them more power over the country, its people, and, most important to them, the money, which Mexico is seriously lacking.

This issue sparked a large number of protests. While those in charge of the judicial branch and the protests attempt to maintain the peace, some will inevitably lead to violence.

"Why so much outrage?" I asked my aunt, a leading figure in judicial independence.

Essentially, the reform makes it so that judges and Supreme Court members are now to be "democratically" chosen.

While the new judicial elections will technically be democratic, the legislative and executive branches will have control over potential candidates, allowing them

to instate those who will serve their needs, but not necessarily the needs of the country. This will essentially kill any form of judicial independence in the country and is one of the biggest outright disregards for the system of checks and balances that Mexico is facing.

According to Ken Salazar, a U.S. ambassador, "the changes could pose 'a major risk to Mexican democracy and enable criminals to exploit 'politically motivated and inexperienced judges.'" These criminals could include both the cartel and corrupt government officials.

Other nations evidently find Mexican judicial freedom absolutely necessary as treaties in years past, such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, which made Mexico promise to guarantee judicial independence, and in exchange for its compliance, it would be awarded cash to fortify it.

Furthermore, *The New York Times* wrote, "The legislation would shift the judiciary from an appointment-based system, largely grounded in training and qualifications, to one in which voters elect judges and there are fewer requirements to serve. Some 7,000 judges would lose their jobs, from the chief justice of the Supreme Court down to those at state and local courts."

Not only would inexperienced and easily swayed judges be elected, but experienced and steadfast judges would lose their job as well.

Unfortunately, the reform was passed on September 11, and the change will most likely go into effect in 2025 when the president-elect, Claudia Sheinbaum, takes office.

This marks a major turning point for Mexico. In spite of continued U.S. warnings about this reform, Mexico continues to hold fast in its bitter defiance when faced with reason.

Like with most things, it is unclear what the future holds for Mexico, but whatever it is, justice will not walk beside it. Please, Saintsmen, pray for the future of Mexico and hope for the best to rise out of its judicial system's ashes.

## FACULTY

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His favorite team is the Cleveland Guardians. Mr. Secrest has two boys, and his favorite hobby is playing with them in his backyard. Other than that, Mr. Secrest paints a lot. He even has one of his paintings currently on display at a gallery in Logan Heights. He says that his paintings show the distinction between representation and abstraction, and that his paintings straddle both sides.

Next is our new counselor, Mr. Bill Sullivan, who teaches AP Psychology. Mr. Sullivan is originally from Toledo, Ohio, where he attended St. John's Jesuit High School, another all-boys Catholic school. He obtained his bachelor's degree in History from the University of Notre Dame, and two master's degrees, one from the University of New Mexico, and the other from Point Loma Nazarene University here in San Diego.

Mr. Sullivan enjoys teaching because he always enjoyed school, and he values education and the opportunities that it can bring to students from all backgrounds. Before coming to Saints, Mr. Sullivan taught in a middle school, and then at Cristo Rey High School for the first four years of its existence. He decided to come to Saints because this is a larger environment than where he had previously taught, and it will allow him to expand and grow as an educator.

"I am amazed at how the teachers, staff, and students have made me feel very welcomed and included,"

Mr. Sullivan said.

Away from teaching, Mr. Sullivan enjoys mountain biking, watching college football, and spending time with his family. His favorite college football team is, of course, his alma mater, Notre Dame. Throughout his life he has traveled to many different places, including Puerto Rico where he lived for a year.

Our final incoming teacher is Mr. Matt Haniger, who teaches freshman PE classes and helps coach Varsity Football. He went to Archbishop Mitty High School in San Jose, and he obtained his bachelor's degree here in San Diego at USD. He taught various math classes at Archbishop Mitty High School for many years, in addition to being the head coach of their football team from 2006 to 2013.

Mr. Haniger decided to come to Saints because he has known Coach Caragher for a long time.

"I wanted to help him rebuild our football program," he said. "Besides, I have always wanted to live here in San Diego."

Mr. Haniger's favorite sports teams are the San Francisco 49ers, the Golden State Warriors, the Seattle Mariners, and the San Francisco Giants. He and his wife have four children, and he enjoys traveling and photography.

It is always wonderful to see new faces around campus every year, and we wish Mr. Secrest, Mr. Sullivan, and Mr. Haniger all the best as they begin their Saints journey.

# The SAT Strikes Back



An editorial  
By **George Burrell ('26)**  
STAFF WRITER

The SAT, or Scholastic Aptitude Test, is making a comeback in college admissions.

The test, a staple of the admissions process for almost a century, was deemed optional by hundreds of US universities in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Today, in 2024, colleges are swiftly moving back to requiring the test in their admissions process. For a test that has a history of racial bias, it may seem unprecedented that it is making such a startling return, but with the landscape of today's admissions process, it is actually not surprising at all.

First, some context. The test we know now as the SAT was not originally intended to be a scholarly aptitude test. Rather, the Army Alpha Test, as it was called, was used to score the intelligence of US military recruits during WWI. It wasn't until 1926 when the first colleges - the Ivy Leagues, specifically - adopted the test for their college admissions processes. Harvard University was the first to fully require the test in 1936, and by the 1960s, most other colleges (including the west coast's UC system) followed suit.

From an education perspective, the SAT was supposed to promote meritocracy, grading all test-takers' performances on a level playing field. In practice, however, it did the opposite, purposely manipulating the test's questions in an attempt to prove white intellectual superiority.

Ever since the first use of the SAT in college admissions, minority groups such as Black Americans and Latino Americans have historically scored lower than white students - and this was not their fault. Some questions, mainly those in the English portion

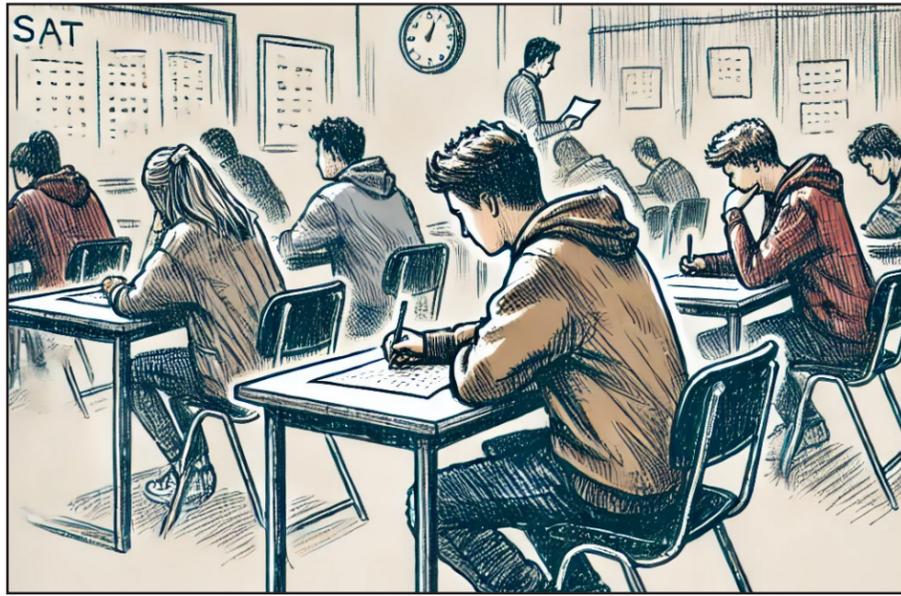


Image created using generative AI.

of the test, used verbiage that white students would understand best. The most infamous example, an analogy question from a test from the early 80s, asked for what the logical equivalent to a "regatta" (rowing race) was in the relationship of a "runner" and "marathon." On that question, white students answered correctly 55% of the time, while Black and Latino students answered correctly only 23% of the time. Although the College Board, the creator and administrator of the SAT, states that these kinds of biased questions have been removed from the test, its dark history still stains the test's credibility to this day.

If the SAT has such a history of bias, then why are so many colleges turning back to requiring it? Put simply, grades do not provide enough information to college admissions officers.

Over the past few years, grade inflation has begun to become more and more commonplace in high schools. Since then, the most popular grade in the US has risen to an A, even

though the national average of academic performance has not improved. College admissions offices need a second scale to determine whether or not a student's performance in class matches his or her performance on the fly, and the SAT provides just that.

Schools are also realizing that if some students from ethnic minorities had submitted standardized test scores they previously withheld believing they weren't up to par would have actually boosted their chance of admission. Colleges do not want to pass on qualified applicants just because they did not have enough information.

With all these factors in mind, it's no surprise that colleges and universities are returning to requiring the SAT. Although it's true the exam has had its problems in the past, today's college admissions offices need a quantifiable standardized test of intelligence to gauge a student's academic potential. As most of today's colleges see it, keeping the standardized tests non-mandatory is no longer an option - it's a necessity.

## SPORTS

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played La Costa Canyon, Poway, Helix, and Brawley.

Although the team has started with these early defeats, they are still very hopeful about the rest of the season. There are six games left to play, which means six more chances for the Saintsmen to win.

The Saintsmen are preparing to make the comeback of the century, getting ready for their matchup against Mater Dei on the 27th of September, and their inferior rival, Cathedral, the following week.

## Cross Country

With another year ahead of it, Head Varsity Coach Christian Yoakum has clearly laid out his goals for the Cross Country team: to reach the state meet, win league, and win CIF. With this year's squad, Saints' chances at fulfilling these objectives look promising, with seniors Ramy Jabaji and Trent Torres proving to be valiant veteran leaders. They can also rely on Coach Yoakum's experience in cross country as he has been coaching the team since 2014.

So far this season, the cross country team has attended one invitational, with Jamie Gerding and Peter Jordan standing out in particular for their commendable performances. Jamie placed 20th in the 3 mile senior/invite race out of 250 runners, and Peter placed seventh in the 3 mile junior race out of 126 athletes.

In addition, the JV team, led by Coach Pradel, Coach Brophy, and Coach Okuley, looks very promising. Freshman Tom Metovit is a Saints prospect to look out for, and he looks to be a very exciting player in the coming years.

As the season progresses, make sure to cheer on your fellow Saintsmen who run this highly intensive physical and mental battle.



## Mike's Music: Balkans



By **Michael Luzi ('25)**  
MANAGING EDITOR

Music is one of the biggest and broadest spectrums of creativity. Everybody has their own music taste, from the soothing sounds of bossa nova to the sick riffs of metal. But, with so many genres, artists, and albums, it can be difficult for anyone to truly discover their music taste. So you don't just end up listening to the next Taylor Swift song like every other normie in the world, I will be feeding you some new, underground albums that you might want to add onto your playlist.

This month's underground album is from the band The Balkans. Based in Atlanta, Georgia, The Balkans were an indie rock band formed by high school and childhood friends, which is typical for many indie bands. They released many singles with Die Hard Indy Records, which grew in popularity in Atlanta, giving them the No. 1 Atlanta Release of 2009.

In 2011, they released their self-titled album under Double Phantom Records. The band was blowing up in Atlanta, and they were set to be the next big alternative indie band for the city, but the band broke up right after the album debuted. This caused the band to never gain the nationwide popularity they deserved, and they were eventually all but forgotten.

The Balkans self-titled LP has many

elements that were popular in the early 2000s in indie rock. The tracks in the album are similar to songs from The Strokes, Arctic Monkeys, and The White Stripes, with many post-punk influences and high energy riffs. The main difference with The Balkans is the emphasis on the raw sound, which is a major element in indie rock music.

The most popular track on this album is "Flowers Everywhere," which is one of the less metal-like songs in the album. The song manages to keep its punk rock sound while keeping the overall tone calming. Gaining over four million listens on Spotify, it has grown The Balkans's fan base.

Other calmer songs include "Violent Girls," "Georganne," and "Cave." These, however, remain relatively unpopular, even within The Balkans fan base because of the elements of punk and relaxing rock not mixing well.

The most punk rock songs in the album include "Edita V," "I Can't Compete," and "Troubled and Done." These tracks are filled with high energy riffs and the best drumming anyone has ever heard, making them the most popular songs within The Balkans's fans. The music video of "Edita V" shows how much passion and energy the drummer, Stanley Vergilis, has while playing.

If you are into raw electric guitar sounds, The Balkans might be the perfect band for you to listen to. They only have one album and a 10th anniversary edition album released on Spotify, but they focus more on quality over quantity.



# Dialing Back on Phones

*California is in the process of passing a bill to limit student phone use while at school – what is it and what could it mean?*

## California Unplugs Phones in Schools



By Joseph Walker ('27)  
CONTRIBUTOR

An incoming phone ban has been hitting news headlines recently. Assembly Bill 3216 would require that the school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools adopt a rule limiting or removing access to phones while under school supervision. This bill would be issued statewide and be fully enforced by July 1, 2026.

You may be wondering why this ban is impending. Studies have shown that the use of smartphones during the school day affects students' performance and grades.

A professor at SDSU, Dr. Jean Twenge published her book surrounding teenage depression. According to her research, eighth grade students who spend ten or more hours in a week on social media are more likely to feel less happy than their peers. Teenagers who spend more than three hours daily are 35 percent more likely to be suicidal.

To put that into perspective, someone who may spend 40 minutes on their phone from their house to school, 50 minutes during their breaks, another 40 minutes from school to home, and another 50 minutes on their phone before falling asleep are 35 percent more likely to be suicidal than those who talk with their peers and just eat lunch.

It is also worthwhile to see what cell phone bans have achieved in other

countries. A phone ban has been in effect since 2015 in Spain, where grade averages went up. In England, where a similar bill has been passed, studies showed that test scores improved around 6.4 percent for juniors in high school.

To put this in perspective, Mr. Wehbe's math test that dropped your grade to a B just became an A.

This ban, of course, isn't thoughtless. The safety of students is valued higher than grades. Therefore, exceptions have been made. For example, in the case of an emergency, students would be allowed to use their phones.

Students may also use their phones for academic reasons such as using apps like Canvas to check their assignments or grades or to complete digital assessments. Students would potentially have to leave their phones in their backpacks or carry around a specialized pouch that could only be opened at certain checkpoint areas.

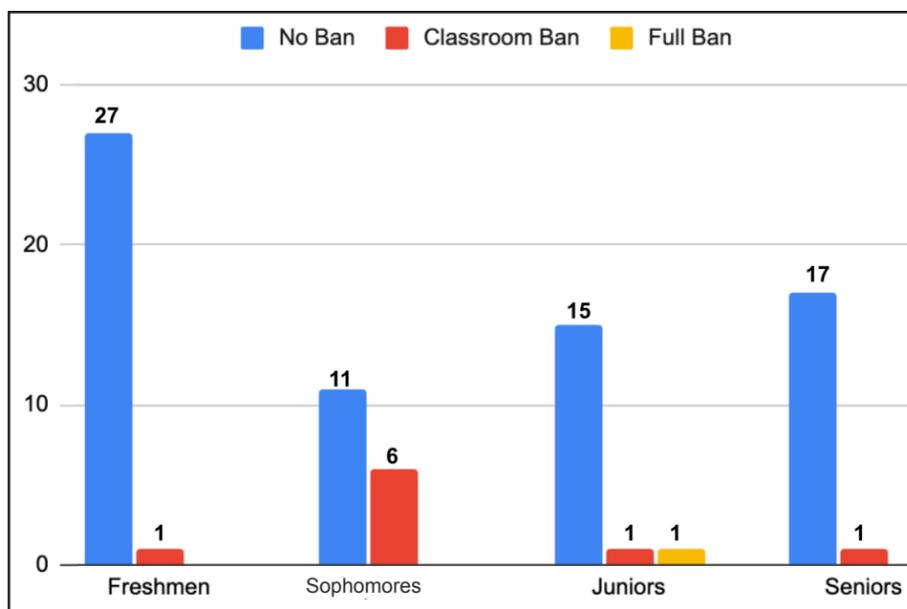
So what does this mean for Saintsmen? Well, those of you older than the current juniors are most likely not to be affected. That being said, the bill isn't very clear in telling which schools will be mandated to restrict phones.

While the bill would not officially affect Saints because it's a private institution, it's a sure reminder of our dependent relationship with the devices, which the evidence shows does more harm than good in an educational environment.



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## Students Share Input on Phone Ban



Students from each grade were polled on their initial opinions of a phone ban with little background information. They responded to the following prompt:

"The California legislature is currently in the process of passing a bill that would require all public schools in the state to create a plan to "limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones," (with exceptions for emergency situations). This bill is not specific in the extent to which cell phones are to be monitored. If Saints were to consider a similar course of action, which of the following options would you support the most? (A) No cell phone ban – Saints continues exactly as it is today; (B) Classroom ban – phones are allowed on campus but must be stored in pouches during class; (C) Full campus ban – phones are not allowed on campus during school hours, including breaks and lunch."

Total number of students polled (n=80); total opposed to any form of ban (n=70); total in favor of a classroom ban (n=9); total in favor of a full campus ban (n=1).



**Sotiri Kanakaris ('28)**

"I think although phones can be a distraction, they are also a tool... The fact is the world isn't the same way it was ten years ago, and now phones are just a thing we need to have."



**Edward W.**

"Though phone and the to communic some detrim feel when I a on my phon school day I a and less social



**Finn McMahon ('26)**

"I think you should put it in the teacher's hands to decide if their classroom does or does not allow them."

VOX



Edited by Benjamin Nault ('26)

**BY THE NUMBERS**

**95%** of teens have used social media before.

-Pew Research Center

**1 in 3** teens say they use social media “almost constantly.”

-Pew Research Center

**3.5 hours** per day is the average time spent on social media by teens.

-Pew Research Center

**2 times** is the increase in risk factor for depression and anxiety symptoms that teens face when they spend over three hours per day on social media.

-Journal of the American Medical Association

**11-0** in favor was the vote in the California Assembly.

**July 1, 2026** is the day the proposed phone ban would take effect in California schools.

# Phones are Endangering Students; It's Time for a Change



By **Liam Olds ('26)**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Cell phones are perhaps the most pervasive intrusion into the realm of education. Schools were once a safe haven for learning, a gentle runway to prepare students to “engage in a changing world,” just as our school’s Integral Student Outcomes suggest. But that is no longer.

Cell phones have sprouted up in every corner of education, choking out students’ attention spans and eroding the foundations of their social skills. While creating adaptable students does come with the responsibility of teaching them how to manage technology, cell phones — when misused as they often are — offer an existential threat to developing minds, the true scope of which still remains unknown.

We as a society cannot wait for disaster to assess the damage — we must act now to protect our youth before irreparable harm is done. Students need a focused and dedicated learning environment to foster their growth, the institution of which proves to be obstructed by the inescapable presence of cell phones in schools.

Following the recommendation of experts around the country, including the U.S. Surgeon General, California is in the process of ratifying a bill (Assembly Bill 3216) that would require schools to create a plan to “limit or prohibit the use by its pupils of smartphones.”

It carries some ambiguity, allowing each district or school site to prepare individualized plans, ranging from prohibiting phones in classrooms to measures that would not allow students their phones at any point during the school day.

The bill, known as the Phone-Free Schools Act, passed the state assembly with a vote of 11-0 in favor. It is now working its way through the state senate where, if passed, it will proceed to the desk of Governor Gavin Newsom to be signed into law.

The Phone-Free Schools Act would take effect in all California public schools by July 1, 2026.

As the bill chugs through the state legislature, it has been the subject of serious debate. While some argue that schools should instead be teaching how to use phones responsibly, others assert how detrimental phones have proven to be on academics and socio-emotional well-being.

It is important to note that restrictions of this kind in schools are hardly unprecedented. Schools can restrict what students and faculty bring to school, what people wear, even what they say if it is a disruption to learning. A school’s primary responsibilities are safety and education, the assurance of which often entails a curated environment.

That being said, outlawing phones during the school day could raise safety concerns in the case of an emergency.

Another concern with school-wide cell phone bans is that they don’t prepare students for the future. In an increasingly digitized world, effective technology use is becoming more and more important. In an interview with The Hill, Richard Culatta, CEO of the International Society for Technology in Education, proposed reforming education instead of implementing an outright ban.

“The far better approach is to make sure you create a culture in your school of healthy tech use,” Culatta said.

As ideal as cultural reform may sound, realistically, teaching students how to

use their personal devices is extremely difficult. Perhaps the most important factor when instilling behaviors is the presence of role models, an ingredient that is painfully absent from the field of digital citizenship.

Even adults have great difficulties managing their cell phone usage, creating a culture in which children see the normalization of technology overuse. As I sat in the airport writing this piece, nine of the ten people sitting in my immediate vicinity were on their phones. The one who was not? Asleep.

While my makeshift study is certainly not reason enough to adopt state legislature, it does point to an undeniable truth: phones have become such a pervasive time-killer that restraining their overuse would be a formidable endeavor if we want to avoid having to uproot and reimagine our entire relationship with technology.

I will acknowledge the fact that I rely on my phone perhaps more than I should. I have it with me almost constantly, and it often serves as a distraction when I’m bored or unwilling to work. The only information that has affected my relationship with my device are statistics regarding the socio-emotional detriment phones can cause. Whether or not you thought technology use was an issue, these figures are difficult to ignore.

The U.S. Surgeon General’s Advisory made reference to a variety of studies pertaining to the issue of technology and social media usage that yielded concerning results. According to a 2022 Pew Research Center study, 95 percent of U.S. teens ages 13-17 have access to a smartphone. 95 percent of teens have used some form of social media in their lives and over one-third of them say they use it “almost constantly.”

The Surgeon General’s Advisory also referred to a study that appeared in the Journal of the American Medical Association, stating that teens who spend over three hours a day on social media “faced double the risk of experiencing poor mental health outcomes including symptoms of depression and anxiety.” On top of that, a 2021 study conducted through the University of Michigan found that eighth and tenth graders spent an average of 3.5 hours per day on social media.

A variety of other cited studies remind that social media is also known to have connections to social exclusion problems, the normalization of self harm and eating disorders, as well as causing disruption to sleep and attention. A study that appeared in the November 2020 edition of the Clinical Psychology Review also found that poor sleep has a link to altered neurological development and can compound depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts.

This is not a question of freedom, it is a question of safety. Phones, while undeniably useful and necessary in the modern world, can be dangerous. They have the unique ability to alter the brain in a way that *will* shape a person for the rest of their life. As more and more evidence emerges, it is becoming clear that if we do not act to limit adolescent usage of smartphones, we will soon live in an incontrovertibly despairing society. A phone ban may not be the perfect win-win solution, but it would be effective.

As we face some of the most challenging issues the world has ever seen, it is imperative that we do not obstruct ourselves from enacting change. All we need right now is hope — don’t let phones stand in the way.

**POP**



akefield ('25)

I love my opportunities, but sometimes, it can have mental effects. I am constantly present during the time I am less present.



Sammy Ayana ('25)

“I’m with it because we still get to use our phones, but it encourages more face-to-face productivity.”



Jacob Washington ('26)

“I think that the issue is more with the teacher than the student or the phone. Limiting phone use doesn’t eliminate the real problem... Getting the students engaged and ready to learn is a skill so restrictions on phone use isn’t going to magically make people better at teaching.”

## Cook Cooks: Remedies



By John Cook ('26)  
CONTRIBUTOR

At the beginning of every school year, Saints has a tradition, where for a couple of weeks, a good fraction of the student body will be out sick. This Saints' Sickness, no matter the strain, somehow always has bad symptoms. But what if food could be the remedy?

Of course, cold medicine is always an option to ease one's sore throat or stuffy nose, but having to drink the same grape syrup every four hours isn't very appetizing. Plus if you take too much, it will only make you sicker. Thankfully, there are some types of foods that will do the trick in easing symptoms while also being pretty tasty.

Undoubtedly, the most annoying cold symptom is a stuffy nose. It forces you to become a mouth breather, and also forces you to blow your nose every couple of minutes, which can quickly get annoying.

Many people believe that spicy foods are the cures to congestion, but just how effective is spice in clearing up one's sinuses? In the world of peppers, there are two main compounds: piperine, prevalent in peppercorns, and capsaicin, common in most other peppers. The spice thins out mucus, and helps it exit the nose more easily. These work as temporary solutions for congestion, but won't completely solve them. In most cases of congestion, inflammation of the sinuses is the root cause of stuffiness. While capsaicin and piperine can help to drain the sinuses, they will quickly fill back up, and your nose will be left feeling as it originally did.

However, there are other foods that have a bit of warmth and also help decrease inflammation. Ginger and turmeric contain the compounds gingerol and curcumin, respectively. Both are



related to capsaicin and piperine, but have extra benefits.

Ginger's relation to the previous two compounds helps it not only to thin out the mucus, but simultaneously to relieve a stuffy nose by clearing the inflammation itself.

Turmeric is also great, but its main problem is its difficulty during digestion, preventing the curcumin from being effective quickly. There is a simple fix, however, since eating turmeric alongside piperine will increase its bioavailability — the rate at which a drug is absorbed — by 2,000 percent, ensuring a greater effectiveness.

Congestion is not fun, but it isn't the only symptom that comes with the "Saints' Sickness."

Waking up to that awful scratchy feeling in your throat is always terrible, but why does that happen? Unless the disease is strep throat, or something similar, the cause is almost always runoff mucus from the sinuses. This means that the previously mentioned foods can also indirectly help prevent a sore throat, but you shouldn't be eating any spicy peppers if you have a sore throat. The spice will

only add to the pain and make your throat worse.

Ginger is an exception, however, because of its pain-reducing and anti-inflammatory properties, and its high amount of antioxidants, all of which help fight off any bacteria sitting in the throat.

Honey is also well known for its soothing properties, and, just like consuming pepper with turmeric, having honey with ginger also increases the overall effectiveness. Just make sure not to indulge in too much honey because an excess of sugar can weaken your immune system.

Other than that, cold foods such as smoothies or ice cream can also help to dull pain by decreasing inflammation, working like an ice pack for the gullet.

While these foods can help to soothe symptoms, they are not perfect, and the best way to keep these symptoms away is to stay healthy in the first place. Make sure you eat enough to keep your body working correctly, and that all of your meals are balanced as well. It's always easier to stay healthy initially than to regain your health again.

## Saints Memorializes PSA Disaster



By Leo Mangine ('27)  
CONTRIBUTOR

On September 25, 1978, a Boeing 727 operating under Pacific Southwest Airlines (PSA) Flight 182 collided with a Cessna 172 in midair. This collision caused both the Cessna and Flight PSA 182 to crash, the latter making impact just north of the intersection of Dwight and Nile Streets. Both the two people in the Cessna, all 135 passengers and crew aboard PSA 182, and seven people on the ground passed away, resulting in a total of 144 fatalities. At the time, this was the most catastrophic air disaster in the United States.

Forty-five years later in 2023, the locals who had lost loved ones as a result of the crash still had no significant memorial honoring the deceased. But plans were being made by President Ed Hearn to build a prayer garden honoring the people who had lost their lives. Mr. Hearn believed he needed to get involved because the school had volunteered its Dougherty Gymnasium (currently the theater) to be used as a makeshift morgue and triage.

"All of us want to make sure the history is not lost," Mr. Hearn said.

The memorial was designed by David Pfeiffer, a close friend of Mr. Hearn's, the same architect who designed many of Saints' school buildings. It will be made up of a pair of benches, a variety of plants, and a plaque with 144 unique, handmade tiles, each representing its own victim.

"Life is fragile, not to be taken for granted, and [it] is a gift to be respected," Mr. Hearn said.

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## Chaplain's Corner

### Freshman Welcome Week



By Fr. Max Villeneuve, OSA  
COLUMNIST

Freshman Welcome Week has come and gone. The beanies which were a source of mild bemusement and annoyance have been placed aside. The ritualization of integrating the freshman class into Saints has concluded with the wrap of the freshman retreat this past weekend.

Saints is certainly a very special place. When I meet alumni, they always smile when I tell them that "the beanies" are still worn every year. The beanies are a contrary sign, one of both "othering" as well as integration. That's the whole point: the wearer is set apart in order to become one with.

This also reminds us of the other time the beanie can be worn: under one's cap at graduation. The beanie which begins as something that stands out becomes something totally integrated into the Saintsman. It points out a lot of the "magic" of our school and our community.

Saints is a special place. It is not only a brotherhood — it is the Brotherhood. We stand as brothers together as a witness against all that the world tries to keep apart. A world that breeds division is countered by a loving community which fosters belonging.

Welcome class of '28! You are now fully part of The Brotherhood. May God continue to bless you during your time here at Saints.

## A Saintsman's Guide to Fantasy Football



By Mattie Gosling ('26)  
CONTRIBUTOR

The NFL season has begun and fantasy football managers need to remain adaptable and informed as the season progresses. Whether you're a seasoned pro or a beginner, here are some tips on how to crush your opponents every week.

### Secure the Top Scoring Positions

Running backs (RB) and wide receivers (WR) are boys who get you those beloved fantasy points. Build your team around them. Look who their quarterback is, educate yourself in the playstyle of the team (either more run or pass) before automatically picking or trading the next top-rated player.

This is especially crucial for mid-season, where some RBs and WRs either prove themselves the elite or prove they aren't worth keeping. Make sure you do your research before picking up or dropping players, and find a suitable replacement for your squad.

### Injuries are Inevitable

Strong backups are vital if you want to have a chance at making the playoffs. Fill up your bench with a couple solid running backs because starters are bound to get hurt. Pay attention to bye weeks as many teams share a bye week, and you don't want to lose your match-up due to not enough players being available in a week.

### Touches/Catches

Look for players who get lots of time with the football in their hands.

Week 1 Saquon Barkley racked up three touchdowns (two rushing, one receiving) with a total of 132 yards and 24 rushing attempts. The Eagles are known to trust in their running backs especially in the red zone. It's not surprising that Saquon was a beast on the field when the offense is centered on rushing.

Last year, Ceedee Lamb was arguably the top receiver in the league, ending the year with 135 receptions and 1,749 yards. The Cowboys realized that when Ceedee had the ball, yards were a byproduct. Pay attention to targets and catches as this tells you who the offense trusts.

### Key Trade Targets

A hot RB to trade for is Zach Moss. While not having an impressive week 2, he enjoyed a 80-20 split in the Bengals backfield between Chase Brown. In addition, the Bengals schedule in the future is leaning in their favor.

### Stream QBs and TEs

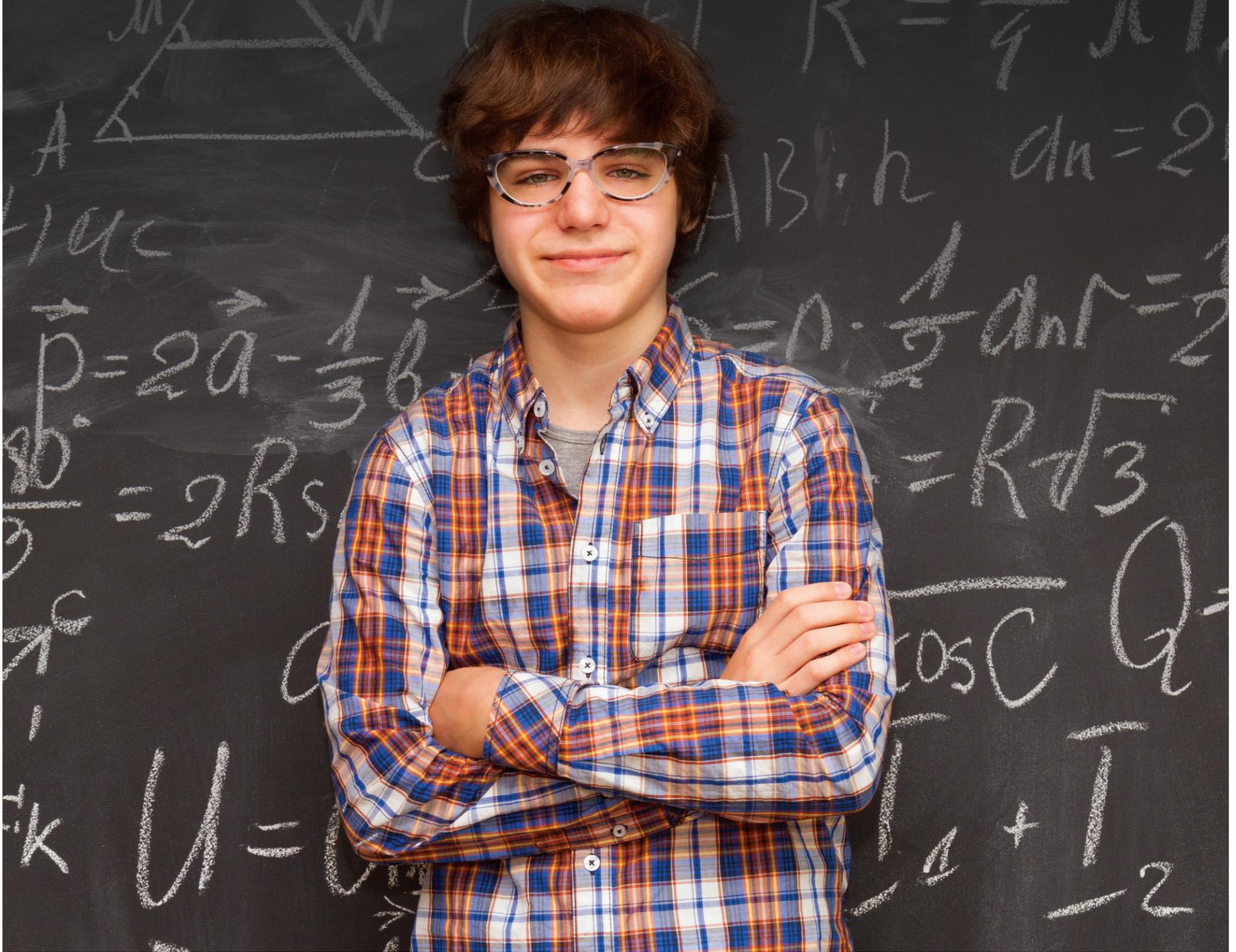
If you didn't invest in a top-tier quarterback or tight end, streaming can still be an effective strategy. Look for players with favorable matchups as these positions often produce usable performances from the waiver wire.

Some good players to pick up off the waiver wire are TE Hunter Henry (Patriots) and quarterbacks Kirk Cousins (Falcons), Jared Goff (Lions), and even Sam Darnold (Vikings).

### Possible Prospects to Keep an Eye on:

WR- Rashid Shaheed (Saints); Jameson Williams (Lions); Brian Thomas Jr. (Jaguars); Dontayvion Wicks (Packers). RB- J.K. Dobbins (Chargers).

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# This Year's Pros and InCONvieniences

**By the editors**

The start of a new school year is where a school's attributes are most starkly defined. A pros and cons list would be an appropriate form of expressing our likes and dislikes, but I believe the term "cons" is a bit harsh. With the connotation that "cons" has, I think our cons are really just our inCONvieniences. If you disagree, I say that you can't spell "inconveniences" without "con."

### Pro: New Field

Over the summer, Saints upgraded its field to a new and improved part of the campus. No longer will Saints athletes have to suffer the effects of the hot turf. Rather, they get to enjoy the colorful and spectacular gift of artificial grass. That's it. That's all. Literally nothing else to say.

### InCONvenience: No More Sweatpants

The new year has also brought a new

addition, or rather subtraction, to the student handbook. Saintsmen are no longer allowed to wear Saints sweatpants on spirit dress days. Now when are we supposed to wear them? When we forget to do laundry?

### Pro: Mr. SEALcrest

The Saints Art Department just became more hardcore. Mr. Secrest, a retired Navy SEAL, now teaches drawing and painting classes. With the skills he learned while diving into foreign waters and working with the best in the US military, he plans on teaching Saintsmen to become the best artists they can be. Did you know that if you rearrange the letters in "Secrest," you get the word "secrets," which just proves that he has secrets from the American government he wants to tell his students.

### InCONvenience: Freshmen at Homecoming

I never thought that I would see the day where I would be dancing with

a bunch of rats. I guess my luck has just run out, because now they can. If a freshman does his Freshman Dance Lessons, then they are allowed to attend the Homecoming dance at SeaWorld. If any of them start acting like freshmen, we should be allowed to serve them only cheese for refreshments.

### Pro: Pershing Avenue Revival

Finally. After endless years of work, a painful eternity we thought would never end, Pershing Avenue has finally reopened. The day that Pershing opened, I got in my car, blasted "Party in the USA," and went up and down it at least five times. I was incredibly elated that I forgot I had to do all of Chesser's annotations for the next night, getting lost in the act of repetitively going up and down a poorly designed and glorified street.

### InCONvenience: Roundabouts

Roundabouts suck. We all know it, we all think it, and we all think that we know how to use them, but PEOPLE CAN'T

USE ROUNDABOUTS. It's such a simple concept, yet so many people miserably fail at this simple aspect of driving. What could be worse than a single roundabout, I ask you. Surely, the answer is nothing, right? WRONG. A double roundabout. The twenty million dollar double roundabout at Redwood and Pershing is San Diego's way of saying "We hate you. Figure it out."

### Pro: New Editing Staff

New year, new editing staff. From the ashes of the late Griffin Cappiello, two men have risen, soaring brightly like a fiery phoenix, bearing an equally burning passion to wield *The Augustinian's* prestigious, mighty pen. What do we have to offer? Complete elimination of dangling modifiers, and misplaced commas. Also, we write with all the sophistication points!

*Editor's Note: Yeah, we probably shouldn't have hired them. We just got a little desperate last year. Congrats, I guess.*

## 2024-2025 Editorial Staff

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Mr. Vladimir Bachynsky  
MODERATOR

Michael Luzi ('25)  
MANAGING EDITOR

Jameson Grohman ('26)  
CHIEF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jonah Villafaña ('25)  
EDITOR

Benjamin Nault ('26)  
EDITOR

Enzo Simon ('27)  
EDITOR

## Be Kind

**By Michael Hoag ('26)**  
CONTRIBUTOR

This month, *The Augustinian* is acknowledging a staff member who has done something especially kind. Congratulations to our one and only Sra. Gormly!

Sra. Gormly may seem intimidating at first glance with the fiery commandments displayed in her Spanish class, but after spending some time with her, you'll quickly see she's one of the kindest people you will ever meet.

Her kindness is quite evident as she consistently gives students second chances, demonstrates extreme patience, and does all of this with an outstanding sense of humor. Who better to ask about the new slogan for this school year?

*The Augustinian:* Do you think Saints does a good job teaching students to be kind?

Sra. Gormly: I think we do, it's in our core values. Regardless of the differences in backgrounds we all share here, kindness is at the core.

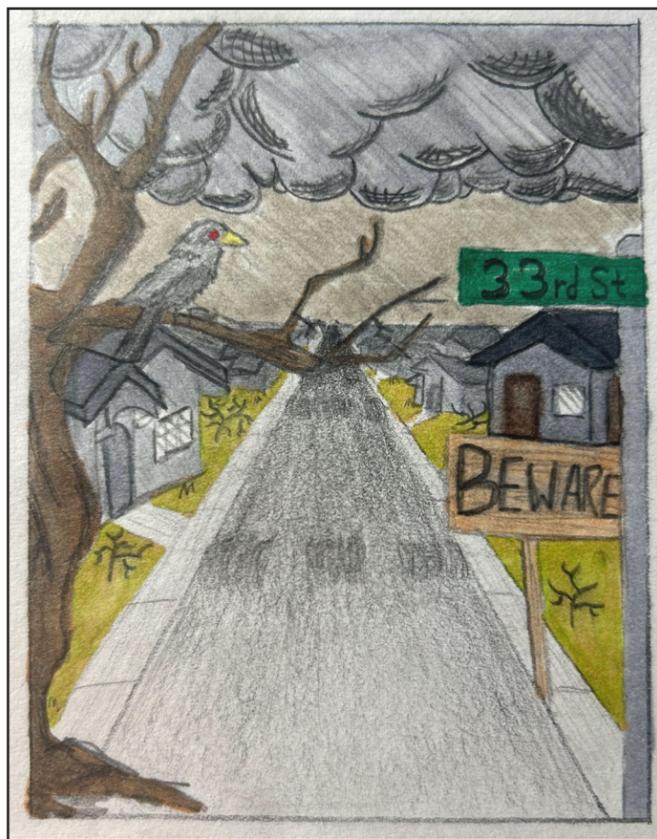
TA: Do you enjoy helping others?

Gormly: Yes, especially as a teacher, it's very fulfilling to help others. You must listen to what students have to say inside and outside the classroom. Over the years, students have come to me to talk to me about issues they are struggling with. Kindness is like a seed. The more you do it, the more it grows.

TA: Who taught you to be kind?

Gormly: My Mother. There was a saying in Spanish that she used to say that roughly translates, "If someone knocks on your door, it's for a reason."

# DO NOT Drive Down 33rd St.



*By Kieron Scanlan ('26)*

## Under 18? Your Instagram Has Changed

**By Benjamin Nault ('26)**  
EDITOR

Instagram has just rolled out big changes affecting minors, that is, those under the age of 18. All new and existing accounts within those ages will have their accounts automatically converted to private accounts rather than public ones. The app will also prevent those who aren't mutual followers from sending direct messages.

Sensitive and inappropriate content will be more limited than before, such as reducing content related to nudity or discussions about self-harm.

To reduce usage at night, teens will stop receiving notifications between ten o'clock p.m. and seven o'clock a.m.

Account holders ages 16 or 17 may change many of these new default settings by themselves, including the ability to make their accounts public. Teens under 16 will need a guardian's permission to alter the default privacy settings, sleep mode, and other restrictions.

While all of these changes are meant to be positive for the app's younger users, some may want to bypass these restrictions by simply lying about their age. Instagram is already thinking five steps ahead. The app claims that they will start requiring people to verify their ages by different means, one of which would be submitting a video selfie to be reviewed and analyzed to confirm that the person is, in fact, the age that they claim to be.

All in all, these changes can be seen as a positive step toward protecting minors on the internet and social media.