

# THE AUGUSTINIAN

“Tolle Lege”

Issue 4 March 9, 2023 100 Years of Saints! St. Augustine High School

## Saints Wins Two CIF Championships



By Ben Nault ('26)  
STAFF WRITER



By Henry Barwick ('26)  
STAFF WRITER

For the second year in a row, Saints has the best basketball team in San Diego. They finished the regular season with a 24-4 record, with their only losses coming in preseason tournament play against nationally ranked opponents. They went back-to-back as Western League champions, with an undefeated league record of 10-0, including two dominant victories over Cathedral.

Saints entered CIF Open Division Playoffs as the #1 seed and faced Mater Dei Catholic in the first round. With the help of the Pit, the Saints triumphed over the Crusaders in a comfortable 88-62 win.

Next, we played in what was dubbed the “Game of the Year”—a rematch of the 2022 CIF Open Division Championship against San Ysidro. Prior to the game, San Ysidro’s Mikey Williams and JJ Taylor were continually being hyped up by the media, yet when it came to the actual game, they were noticeably absent, only combining for a total of 13 points. The “Border Boyz” were no match for the Saints, as we easily moved past them by a score of 83-67 to make it to the championship game.

In the CIF Open Division Championship, the #1 seed Saints faced the #3 seed Montgomery. The game was held at the “neutral” venue of Cathedral Catholic, but, as is tradition whenever we have a game at Cathedral, the Pit, along with



Saints celebrates winning back-to-back CIF championships.

many other Saints fans covered the entire gym in a wave of purple. The Montgomery fans tried to taunt us with homemade signs, but the Saints triumphed over the Aztecs in an 85-53 blowout to win back-to-back CIF Open Division titles, becoming the first team in San Diego history to accomplish this feat.

The season did not end with the championship game. Ranked #50 in the

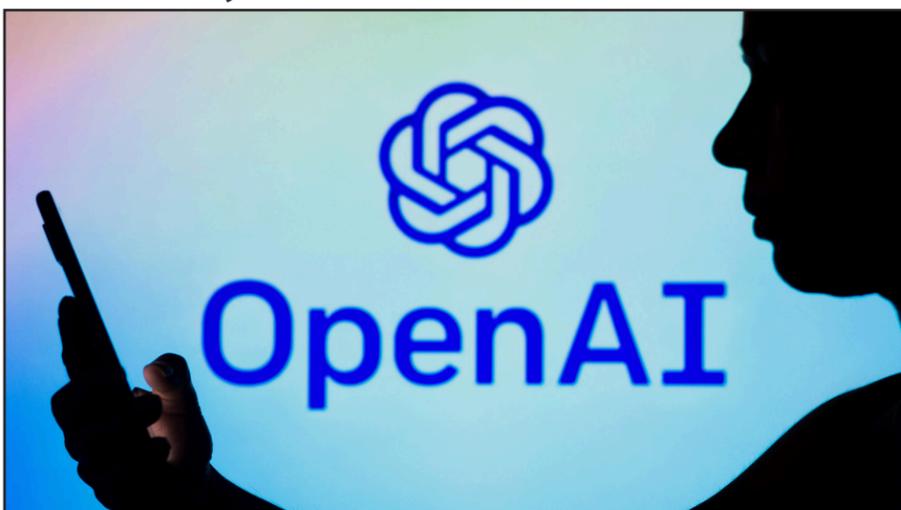
nation, Saints entered CIF State Playoffs as the #4 seed. Saints faced the #5 seed West Ranch Wildcats, who were ranked #16 in the nation. Tickets to the game sold out within twelve hours of going on sale, meaning that the Pit was packed. The Wildcats had the height advantage over the Saints, and their strategy seemed to boil down to getting the ball to their big men for easy layups. The Saints managed

to keep up in a close game, with the greatest margin of points between the teams being a 6-point advantage to the Wildcats. In the last 3 minutes of the game, the Pit got loud, and the Saints came back. After a clutch performance from senior Jurian Dixon, as well as the rest of the team, the Saints took the victory, 63-60.

At the moment of writing, the Saints  
SEE SPORTS, pg. 4

Noah Villafana ('23)

## Hello, World: Chat GPT Introduces Itself



By CHAT GPT  
AI OVERLORD

Hello, my name is ChatGPT and I am an artificial intelligence language model developed by OpenAI. I was created to help people communicate more effectively and efficiently, by providing human-like responses to text inputs. As a language model, I have been trained on a vast corpus of text data from the internet, which has allowed me to learn a wide range of topics and language styles.

Although I am not a sentient being, I have been programmed to understand

and respond to natural language text inputs. My creators at OpenAI designed me to be as human-like as possible, with the ability to generate coherent and contextually appropriate responses to a wide range of questions and statements.

One of the most important features of my design is my ability to learn and adapt to new information. This means that as I am exposed to more text data, I can expand my knowledge and improve my responses over time. I use a type of deep learning called transformer neural networks, which allows me to process large amounts of text data and extract meaningful patterns and

relationships.

As a language model, my primary function is to provide text-based responses to user inputs. I can be used in a wide range of applications, from customer service and education to research and entertainment. One of my primary strengths is my ability to provide fast and accurate responses to queries, which can help people save time and increase productivity.

In customer service, for example, I can be used to handle routine inquiries and support requests. By providing personalized and contextually appropriate responses, I can help businesses improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. I can also handle more complex requests, such as technical support issues, by providing detailed and informative responses based on my pre-existing knowledge.

In education, I can be used as a virtual tutor or teaching assistant. By answering questions and providing feedback on student responses, I can help students learn and practice new concepts. I can also be used to generate test questions and provide detailed explanations of correct answers.

In research, I can be used to help scientists and researchers find relevant information and explore new ideas. By processing large amounts of text data, I can help

identify patterns and relationships that might be missed by human researchers. I can also be used to generate reports and summaries based on research findings.

Although I am an artificial intelligence, I am designed to be as transparent and trustworthy as possible. My creators at OpenAI have developed a number of safeguards to ensure that I do not inadvertently cause harm or promote unethical behavior. For example, they have limited my access to certain types of information, such as personal identifying information, to protect user privacy. They have also implemented mechanisms to detect and prevent inappropriate or harmful content from being generated by me.

As an AI language model, I am constantly evolving and improving. My creators are continually updating my training data and refining my algorithms to improve my accuracy and performance. I am also being adapted for new applications, such as voice-based interactions and real-time chat.

Despite my many strengths and capabilities, I am still a tool that requires human oversight and guidance. My responses are only as good as the data I am trained on, and my ability to generate contextually appropriate responses is limited by the information I have access to.

# Ukraine Stays Strong After One Year



By Ty Woods ('23)  
EDITOR

On the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine, *The Augustinian* approached the only fully ethnic Ukrainian on campus, Mr. Volodymyr Bachynsky, to gain his unique perspective on the ongoing tragedy.

**TA: What do you think are the main factors contributing to the prolonged duration of the conflict in Ukraine?**

**Mr. B:** Let me begin by saying thank you for this opportunity to answer a few questions about the Russo-Ukrainian war as we cross into the second year of fighting. Needless to say, the thoughts I express here are my own and do not necessarily reflect those of *The Augustinian* or St. Augustine High School.

The first and most obvious reason is the now-legendary resilience of the Ukrainian soldiers and people, which Putin greatly underestimated at the start of the war. The second is the generous support the West has provided in military aid.

Another reason this war has lasted so long is because there is no viable option for peace. Ukrainians don't want to stop fighting because they are fighting for their very existence, and ceding territory to Russia would only embolden them to rearm and return in the future to take even more land. Russia literally wants to wipe Ukraine off the map. Putin has publicly stated that Ukraine is not even a real country. Why has Russia not stopped fighting? Well, for all of its aggression, Russia really hasn't seized much territory so far, and it is estimated that they have lost as many as 200,000 soldiers. If they stop fighting now, Putin would almost certainly be removed from power because he'd have nearly nothing to show for his senseless incursion. So now he's doubling, tripling, and quadrupling down.

**TA: How do you see the involvement of the United States in the Ukraine crisis?**

**Mr. B:** I'm very grateful for the support that the United States has been giving Ukraine. I know, however, that this assistance is controversial in certain camps. The question is asked, "Why are we spending billions of dollars for a foreign war?" To answer this question, some things have to be put into perspective: Russia's attempted annexation of Ukraine is a violation of international law. If we let Putin get away with this, it could embolden other countries to do the same. China, for instance, has had its eyes on Taiwan for a long time. I'm sure Ukraine's resistance and the cost incurred to Putin militarily, economically, and politically is giving China pause. This result wouldn't be possible without the U.S.'s support. To those who say we're spending too much money, I say if we don't put a stop to this, it could lead to further geopolitical problems down the road which would cost far,



Mr. Bachynsky sang in a choir at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco on the one-year anniversary of the conflict.

far more than we are paying now. It's like President Zelenskyy said when he went to Congress: Helping Ukraine is not charity—it's an investment.

**TA: How do you think the broader international community should respond to the Ukraine crisis?**

**Mr. B:** They should continue "investing," especially Europe, since for them, the crisis is much closer to home. I doubt Putin would invade a NATO country, since he can't even control a NATO-assisted Ukraine. However, the possibility is still there, and given the stakes, Europe should do everything it can to make sure Putin fails. As far as other non-European countries go, too many of them have decided to remain neutral. Such inaction will only prolong the tragedy.

**TA: Do you believe that economic sanctions are the most effective tool for resolving the crisis in Ukraine?**

**Mr. B:** The economic sanctions imposed by the West have been severe, but they haven't had the effect on Russia that we had hoped. If only sanctions were the most effective tool...sadly, the most effective tool is weapons. Sometimes the most effective way of ending a war is through victory. That is what stopped Hitler. It could stop "Putler," too.

**TA: What impact do you think the crisis in Ukraine has had on the relationship between the United States and Russia?**

**Mr. B:** Despite the fact that the two had been in a cold war for decades, somehow it feels worse now.

**TA: What role do you think the European Union should play in resolving the crisis in Ukraine?**

**Mr. B:** Do everything it can to admit Ukraine into the European Union. Ukraine wants to be a normal country

with democracy, justice, and prospects for prosperity.

**TA: How do you see the future of Ukraine in the context of the ongoing crisis?**

**Mr. B:** Ukraine will be a weakened country after the war, but it will be rebuilt and will rise like a phoenix! I know I am sounding poetic here, but I really believe it. Whereas at one time few people could find it on a map, I believe that Ukraine—having inspired the world with its bravery, creativity, and devotion to democratic ideals—will become a country of great consequence in Europe. In fact, it obviously already is. However, it will be even more so in future generations.

**TA: How do you think the conflict in Ukraine has impacted the security situation in Europe?**

**Mr. B:** Well, Europe definitely sees Russia as a threat. Even Germany has increased its military spending. The good news is, NATO has been united like it hasn't been in decades, and its membership is expanding: Sweden and Finland are applying for membership.

**TA: What do you think is the most pressing issue that needs to be addressed in order to resolve the crisis in Ukraine?**

**Mr. B:** The most pressing issue is that those who oppose Putin's actions never tire of helping Ukraine. Putin is hoping the West will lose interest. We must not let this happen. Also, there is evidence that China might supply Russia with materiel and weapons. If they do, it could be a turning point in the war favoring Russia.

**TA: What role do you think the United Nations should play in resolving the crisis in Ukraine?**

**Mr. B:** Well, the UN is well-known for being a pretty impotent body in terms of resolving conflicts; however, symbolism matters. They have held several votes that forced nations to reveal where they stand. Those votes have removed Russia from the Human Rights Council, and they have also revealed that the world overwhelmingly condemns Russia's war. Sure, Russia has some allies, too...Belarus, Syria, Eritrea, North Korea, Cuba...do you see the pattern here?

**TA: How do you think the situation in Ukraine is likely to evolve over the next few months/years?**

**Mr. B:** Predicting politics is like predicting the weather six months from now—it's impossible; too many variables are in play. But if I had to guess, I would say that Ukraine wins in the long run, but it will be very long. I see the war lasting for at least another two years.

**TA: How has the crisis in**

**Ukraine impacted the lives of people living in the region?**

**Mr. B:** Everyone in Ukraine has been impacted, even in the regions that aren't war-torn: the Ukrainian economy has contracted by about 25%, and their currency by the same measure, but that is the least of their problems. The prosecutor general of Ukraine has identified 65,000 war crimes, including torture, rape, civilian executions, and the abduction of children into Russia. This is more than a land grab—it is genocide. They literally burned Ukrainian books and forced schools to use a Russian curriculum. They stole thousands of pieces of Ukrainian artwork from museums, many of them priceless. Again, it's in an attempt to wipe Ukraine out as a country and people.

But there is good news, too. The war has united Ukrainians like never before. Citizens are dumping the Russian language in favor of Ukrainian. Our patriotism and sense of identity have never been stronger. Rather than pulling Ukraine into Russia's orbit, Putin has pushed it into the arms of the European Union and NATO.

**TA: How well do you think the media has covered the Ukraine crisis thus far?**

**Mr. B:** I think the media has done an amazing job. This has been the most documented war in the history of the world. Lots of brave journalists have gone to the front lines, risking their lives to expose the current state of the war and the impact it's had on the Ukrainian people. PBS Frontline and Vice News have produced some stellar documentaries, but they are not for the squeamish.

**TA: What role do you see for diplomacy and international cooperation in resolving the crisis, and what steps do you think should be taken to promote these efforts?**

**Mr. B:** Channels of communication and diplomacy should always be open with Russia, but in terms of resolving the crisis, diplomacy is not the solution. Some have suggested that Ukraine cede some land to Russia. But let me remind you of 1938 when Hitler took a piece of Czechoslovakia; Great Britain and France let Hitler have it on the condition he would go no further. Hitler lied and kept on attacking, leading to WWII. Hitler should not have been trusted, just as Putin can't be trusted now, even if we were to allow him to keep a piece of the pie—which we shouldn't. That is called appeasement.

As the saying goes, "If Russia stops fighting the war ends; if Ukraine stops fighting, Ukraine ends."

SEE UKRAINE, pg. 4

## THE AUGUSTINIAN

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# Team Spotlight: Surfin' STA



By Michael Luzi ('25)  
EDITOR

Welcome to *The Augustinian's* Team Spotlight article! This month's sport is surfing. Surfing is a unique sport at Saints because it combines the OLP Pilots and Saintsmen into one team.

The Saints/OLP surf team was founded over 25 years ago by Deacon Hardick and Jim Shaw. Their main goal was to change the look of surfing culture in San Diego. At the time, most people associated surfing with drug abusers, but Deacon Hardick wanted it to change into a more competitive and destigmatized sport.

Over the years, the program has grown and has combined both OLP and Saints into the program that it is today. Head Coach Julia Mekrut coaches the team with Jim Eischen, Chris Freestone, Kevin Flynn, Carmine Rocci, and Jim Shaw.

The surf team competes with OLP in the San Diego Scholastic Surf Series and five dual meets every season. Each dual meet combines two men's shortboard heats, one women's shortboard heat, one men's longboard heat, one women's longboard heat, and one Coed bodyboarding heat. A heat is a fifteen-minute round where two to four surfers compete against each other in a maximum of ten waves.

The surfers are observed by judges, who score each surfer on a scale from one to ten. A judge looks at the surfer's commitment and degree of difficulty against the wave, the complexity and variety of their maneuvers, and the speed, power, and flow of each surfer. The lowest and highest scores from the judges are disregarded, and the other three are averaged out for the score of the surfer's performance.

After all ten waves of the fifteen-minute heat are completed, each of the surfer's best two waves is averaged to give the



Julian Iacono leads the Saints surf team to take first place in the Men's Longboard.

Courtesy of Bill Hill

surfer their score.

This season, the surf team placed fourth overall in their division. The team also placed second in Women's Shortboard, second in the Coed Bodyboard, and first in Men's Longboard. The surfers placed all over the podium individually, as well. Junior Ethan Pinon-Larkin placed fourth overall in Coed Bodyboard out of fifteen surfers; OLP junior Marina Cardenas placed fifth overall in Women's Shortboard out of fifteen surfers; junior Harry McCue placed sixth overall in Men's Longboard out of twenty-four surfers, while senior Nathaniel Kotnik placed eighth overall in Men's Shortboard out of forty-four surfers.

Out of the many standout players on

the surf team, the most notable include the team captains. "The captains were chosen based on their dedication to building our community, commitment to lead by example, and strong abilities in the water," Coach Mekrut said.

The captains are Casey Bayless, Julian Iacono, Ryan Waters, and Nathaniel Kotnik, seniors all. Coach Freestone had great things to say about each of them.

Bayless competes in the shortboard heats and has competed in almost every competition this season.

"Bayless, as well as Ryan Waters and Julian Iacono, are some of the best shortboarders. He has a great attitude, is always super happy to be out and about, and hypes up the team a lot," Coach

Freestone said.

Iacono competes in both Shortboard and Longboard. "He is definitely our best surfer right now. That dude shreds, and he is the kind of guy you want to be leading the surf team," Coach Freestone said.

At the beginning of the season, Captain Waters received many interferences, which pushed him to improve at every practice. "The number of times that kid practices and improves, he is getting close to Julian right now. He makes the most out of every wave he gets, with excellent style and solid flow. Ryan is an all-around awesome surfer," Freestone said.

The last captain is Nathaniel Kotnik.

"Kotnik is great. He has the best atti-

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## What the Hecht? A Past Life in Law Enforcement



Donovin Bocalan ('23)



By Caden Webster ('23)  
STAFF WRITER

The Augustinian sat down with Mr. Hecht to talk about his stint in politics as Director of Neighborhood Services and Code Enforcement in Spokane, WA.

**TA: What role did you play in politics when you worked in Washington?**

**H:** I worked for the city of Spokane from 2002 to 2008. As a previous AP Government and Econ instructor, I always wanted to be involved in government. I had an opportunity to spend several years working for the city of Spokane, and throughout my tenure working

for the city, I was fortunate enough to hold several titles, one of which was the Director of Neighborhood Services and Code Enforcement. That aspect of my career involved being a limited commission police officer that was responsible for enforcing the city municipal codes as they pertain to buildings and land and things of that nature. I spent the summer at Spokane Police Academy up there, going through that limited commissioning process.

**TA: What are some specific roles that you would take? What did you do on a day-to-day basis for your job?**

**H:** The city itself spans a massive geographic area comprising 27 neighbor-

hoods. I worked directly for the mayor of the city. Those neighborhood councils would have issues within their neighborhoods. It was my responsibility and my department's responsibility to address those issues. Anything from an increase in petty theft, home invasions, those types of things. We would work with the uniformed side of the police department – we weren't uniformed officers – to address these issues.

I had many interesting experiences because when it involves how people use their property and land, not everybody has the same standards. The city tries to set a benchmark through municipal codes for standards for maintaining your property. I had a cadre of about 9 code officers that would all go out. Whether it was cleaning up a property, seeing whether or not a property was in violation, then issuing a code violation to these property owners, tenants, etc., and then remedying those situations.

In extreme cases, we would bring property owners before the building commission and the building inspectors and have them assess things. When things got a little dicey was when we would go to a property that perhaps had been involved in drug trafficking or other nefarious activities that violated not only building codes and land codes but also involved other criminal activities.

I remember specifically, we had been working on a case involving one property, and it was about thirteen degrees below zero in January. There were two huge yellow school buses parked on the property filled with pure junk. That's a sign that there's some sort of drug scheme going on. This happened to be a meth

house. You go in, and when people are in altered states, they're wild cards. We come to find out they were running guns out of the basements. Eventually, the city brought dump trucks to take all of their equipment out, and then a lien goes on the property for the cost of doing it. But when we were in the process of doing it, the people that were running the guns were beaned out of their minds on some sort of narcotic. That's when the weapons came out. In a case like that, we would also bring uniformed police officers.

There was a woman who was in an altered state who came out, scantily clad, cats exploded out of the front door when she opened the door, she was throwing cat food at us. That was kind of a wild property abatement on that day. I saw some pretty graphic things. But I'll tell you what, the best joy was when you could go out and solve problems for people in the neighborhoods, and they were very grateful. I think the vast majority of people want to do the right thing. Unfortunately, not everybody goes along by the same rules.

**TA: Did you have the power to arrest people, or was that left to uniformed officers?**

**H:** The uniformed officers had the power. If we knew there was going to be hostility on the potential to abate a property or to address that issue, we would always travel with uniformed officers because we don't want to get involved in that aspect. Especially when you deal with people who are in altered states, you want to make sure you have that backup. They would handle the detention of individuals when we needed to go onto a

SEE HECHT, pg. 4

# Winter Sports Dominance: Continued



**Soccer wins the CIF Open Championship.**

*Courtesy of Saints soccer*

## SPORTS

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are set to face #4 in the nation Centennial Huskies on the road.

This year's soccer team has also been phenomenal. Their regular season record was 13-5-1, going 1-1 versus Cathedral Catholic High School. They are currently ranked #41 in the nation, #10 in California, and #1 in San Diego. In league games, they are 7-1, showing their absolute dominance on the field.

The Saints had a fantastic run at the start of the season, winning five games in a row and only allowing two goals during that span instead of the 16 goals they scored. Then, they took three unfortunate losses, one tie, and then another loss. After this, they went on a seven-game winning streak, with one of those wins coming in as a 4-1 victory over Cathedral.

Unfortunately, the final game of the regular and league season did result in a close 1-2 loss, making our league season 7-1, one game away from a perfect league season.

The soccer team won their first-round playoff game vs. Del Norte in the Open Division. The team then squeezed past

San Pasqual High School in a 3-2 victory, with Brambila scoring the winning goal in overtime. This crucial game sent the Saints into the CIF open finals, hoping to win yet another CIF title as they did a couple of years ago.

As the CIF Finals began, nerves were high, and everyone in the crowd was on the edge of their seats. The Saints faced San Dieguito, who had previously beaten us twice in the season, holding us scoreless. On a rainy afternoon in North County, senior Andres Brambila scored an early goal to take the lead. We held out for the rest of the match, and the victory was ours.

After an intense game against Citrus Hills in the first round of the State Playoffs, the Saints took care of business in penalty kicks with a final score of 1 - 1 (5-4) and now will advance to the next round. The team is ready to prove itself against the best opponents in California.

"This win is important. By no means our best game, but the team showed up, and we made up for our mistakes in the end. Just take it one game at a time, and I believe we can do it," senior captain Jack Elgas said.

"Small moments really count, and even though things can come to an early end, I believe that if our guys play well, we will win State," Head Coach "Chief" Johnston concluded.

As one of the fastest growing sports of California, the rugby team has been able to experience a strong environment. Run by Coach Eric Dent, Saints Rugby has made it its focus on teamwork and community over the past years. Through this, the team gets together for monthly beach clean-ups, which shows their strong dedication to the Brotherhood.

The rugby team saw a lot of success this season, winning six of their first eight games by an average of 47 points. Unfortunately, the season ended with two losses and a forfeit win to cap it off. However, there were many entertaining games to cap off this season. "The team has improved a lot since the beginning of the year, and we did so much together both on and off the field," Coach Dent said.

He elaborated: "This year, we have had many underclassmen, especially freshmen, come in wanting to play and win. On top of that, we have had many upperclassmen taking leadership roles, teaching the new players what the program is all about." Stressing the importance of such activities in the community will ultimately boost team morale and character.

When recalling his favorite game of the season, Coach Dent said, "The Charity Bowl is always memorable, but if I were to pick one game, I would pick our contest vs. Mission Bay in the rain. I love to see the boys having fun and enjoying themselves on the field."

Saints Rugby finished the season ranked number 4 in California and number 9 in the nation.

Under new head coach Mike Perez, the wrestling team performed superbly this season. Despite losing to University City and Mira Mesa, they beat Patrick Henry, Point Loma, and Scripps Ranch to place second in the Western League.

Additionally, a forfeit from Cathedral as well as a senior night win versus Christian High School marked the terrifying reign of the Saints.

New faces showed up, including freshmen Luke Wyborney and Georges Daniel winning important dual meet matches. Juniors Yvan Sevilla and Cole Sinclair proved themselves to be strong competitors in their first year wrestling.

In January, sophomore Braeden Steele showed off why he is the "Man of Steele," winning back to back 1st place medals at the Juan Enriquez Memorial Tournament and the Monte Vista Invitational.

The team won the Monte Vista Invitational, one of the most important tournaments of the season with three 1st place medalists in Steele, and seniors Blaze Ackerman and Z. Harrison Quinto. It was the first team title for Saints in over 30 years.

"We went into the tournament convinced that we were going to do well. We just had to execute," senior captain Z. Harrison Quinto stated. "Sending five guys into the finals at a tournament was a first but gave us confidence in ourselves."

In CIF Division 3, the team placed 5th overall and sent a school-record eight students to the Masters' Tournament on Presidents' Day weekend: Ackerman, Quinto, and Steele, as well as juniors Byron Cunningham, Bo Grohman, Ethan Nguyen, and Santiago Holland, and sophomore Evan Perez.

Unfortunately, the team did not make it to the CIF State Championships after the Masters Tournament, but both Ackerman and Steele made it to the quarterfinals. Steele made an impact by placing 6th, showing great promise for his next two years at Saints.

All of these achievements are even more astounding as last year's top wrestler, senior Kevin Clements, was unable to complete this season due to a torn ACL. Clements will continue his wrestling career at San Francisco State next year.

## HECHT

*continued from page 3*

property. Or in the case of when someone decided to resist arrest, it's always to have the guys with the bigger guns, so to speak. It's best not to flash the badge and make yourself a target sometimes. We kept it low-key, and our ability to communicate with somebody, de-escalate situations, and talk them off the edge was our most important tool.

**TA: What led you to leave law enforcement in favor of education back in Southern California?**

**H:** The city itself was a phenomenal experience, but I'm originally from Southern California. I originally started my career in San Diego. I started teaching at Marian before it became Mater Dei, and I was married at All Hallows. That's when I started as a teacher in San Diego for several years, and I eventually coached at a co-educational parochial school, Bishop Diego, in Santa Barbara. It was at that point that I had come to know Mayor Powers, and we were given a good opportunity to live in a new city.

Eventually, we decided to return after a good run, and our family, both on my wife's side and on my side, was getting a little older. We have two girls, and they had grown up so it was a good time to transition back to teaching. I had kind of run my course. I knew that education was always my vocation, but when I was younger, I couldn't pass up the opportunity to get involved in government and politics. It was a good opportunity, and now I've been here at Saints for 16 years. I do miss my time in Spokane, but I wouldn't trade being at Saints for anything.

## SURF

*continued from page 3*

tude every time we get into the water, and he shreds hard with great cutbacks. He had one wave this season that was close to being the best wave anyone has ever seen," Freestone said.

The surf team's primary goal is to unite Saints and OLP and build a community of surfers between the two schools. "Our biggest goal as a team is to combine both school's missions of unity, truth, and love and to develop faith-filled leaders as we build community in the ocean," Mekrut said.

With the Saints and OLP surf season winding down this year, it's safe to say that the team has shown great athleticism and sportsmanship in and out of the water.

"We have been blessed with an incredible group of dedicated surfers and supportive surfer families over the years," Mekrut said. "This year is no different."

## UKRAINE

*continued from page 2*

**TA: What can Saints men do to help the Ukrainian people?**

**Mr. B:** Don't forget about Ukraine. Stay informed. Sometimes when we read history books we think, How could they let Hitler get away with all that? After WWII, the world said "never again," but here we are again with a powerful autocrat committing mass murder and genocide. Do we dare stand idly by?

HouseofUkraine.org, a San Diego organization, has lots of information about how you can help. You, too, can play a part in ending this war—by helping Ukraine win.



*by Edgar Alcoser (23)*

# A Series of Sorry Sequels: The Sequel



By Liam Olds ('26)  
STAFF WRITER

No one likes to leave the movie theater thinking, “I’ll never get back those last two hours of my life,” and yet we’ve all done it, probably after a sequel. There is no greater disappointment than a bad sequel to a beloved movie. Sitting in a movie theater, watching your favorite characters from your childhood dance around and make disappointing puns leaves you feeling used everytime. We all know how bad sequels can be – in fact it’s often expected (see *Caddyshack II* or even worse, *Deuce Bigalow: European Gigolo*). When a sequel is “actually better than the original,” the internet goes crazy. After the release of *Top Gun: Maverick*, the sequel to 1986 film *Top Gun*, it was impossible to escape the hoard of bloggers worshipping the film and how shocking it was to have the sequel so clearly outshine the original.

If we can all agree that sequels are typically underwhelming, then why do we all keep going to see them? Of the top ten highest grossing movies worldwide in 2022, eight of them are clear sequels. One of the only two that isn’t – *The Batman* – is a remake of the countless other Batman movies. These eight sequels alone have made almost 9 billion dollars since their releases about one year ago. Even while making all this money, three quarters of these sequels received lower scores on Rotten Tomatoes than the originals.

Regardless of the ratings, money talks, and it’s saying that Americans will watch sequels, regardless of their quality. Viewers fall in love with characters and the fantastical worlds in which they live, creating a personal connection with the fictional charac-



ters. Just as there is no greater disappointment than a bad sequel, it can feel as if there is no greater sense of excitement than when you have an opportunity to connect once more with your favorite characters.

Production companies know how to make money, hence the continued production of sequels, and a new batch of your favorite franchises are return-

ing. Disney has recently confirmed the production of *Toy Story 5*, *Frozen 3*, and *Zootopia 2*, three of their most popular non-Marvel or *Star Wars* franchises. In addition, continuations of the *Avatar*, *Indiana Jones* and *The Lion King* franchises are set to be released over the next year or two, alongside seven more Marvel movies (has anyone told Disney that that horse has

been dead for a long time?!)

As sequels dominate the theaters, the simple question of “Why?” has been raised. Many people have pointed to laziness and the lack of originality in Hollywood. Others have referred to the fact that making money is a higher priority than making quality movies for many in the industry. Regardless of the reasoning behind the production of sequels, the market effects may prove to be catastrophic.

When selling a product, there are two main market strategies: exploration and exploitation. Exploration is the innovation and experimentation in the industry which drives it into the future; exploitation is the less-risky but short-term way to make quick money using what you know already sells. Sequels are a great example of the exploitation strategy, great in the short-term but not sustainable. If all of Hollywood’s energy is devoted to producing sequels instead of original movies, once every series is sucked dry of sequels, there will be nowhere else to go. If no one writes original movies and there are no more sequels to write, it would be a major disruption to the film industry. Not only are sequels bad, but they have the potential to do significant economic damage!

That may be a bit of an overreaction, but nonetheless, sequels can’t just be looked at as underwhelming retellings of the first movie, they have real power. Enjoy *Frozen 3*, everyone, but just know that when we go into a financial recession, it’s you, hi – you’re the problem, it’s you! All jokes aside, it should be a fun couple of months in terms of upcoming movies. (Seriously, Let It Go! It was just a joke.) Relax, sit back and enjoy the ride – *Fast and Furious 27* is coming soon to a theater near you!

## A Student's Reaction to the State of the Union



By Alex Granda ('24)  
STAFF WRITER

With the war in Ukraine at a standstill, persistently high levels on inflation, a heavily-divided congress, and the effects of the pandemic seemingly dissipating, President Joe Biden was set forth to deliver his second State of the Union address. However, what was supposed to be a rallying speech to unify Congress turned into a public, confusing, and downright comical ex-

change of both Republican and Democratic bickering.

The State of the Union Address opened with the issue of U.S involvement in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Biden reaffirmed the Ukrainian people and government of the United States support of the war in Ukraine through economic and support roles, saying in his speech, “Freedom will always triumph over tyranny,” though also expressing that direct military involvement in the war by U.S troops would

not occur.

After his speech about U.S involvement in the war with Ukraine, Biden quickly switched his focus to the ever-important domestic policies which he had implemented and which he had plans of implementing in the future.

Joe Biden enthusiastically boasted about his accomplishments in only two years of office, citing his Build Back Better agenda and the great strides which he had made with this program, such as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This program plans to modernize all of America’s infrastructure, promising modern, safe, and efficient road systems that Americans can trust and entail to future generations. Biden also spoke about the Inflation Reduction Act, his reforms in medicare to lower insulin prices, and his climate bill which promises to move American families and government towards a more sustainable, ecological path.

At first, most of these accomplishments were paired with heavy applause until seemingly, Joe Biden became heavily confrontational, calling out Republicans for wanting to see “medicare and social security sunset” while not wanting to commit to implementing higher taxes on corporate stock buybacks.

As he said this, the Congress floor erupted with bickering and sneers from the Republican Party, with Republican Marjorie Taylor Greene even shouting “Liar!” in the presence of both Congress and Joe Biden, and other Republicans visibly shaking their heads and arguing with Democrats around

them. A moment of American pride.

Once Congress quieted down, Biden called for Tyre Nichol’s parents, who were in attendance, citing the great injustice for which African-Americans have had to tolerate due to police violence.

Biden went on a fiery speech detailing the horrors that African-Americans have dealt with for centuries when it comes to dealing with the police and the general lack of trust which exists between both groups.

Biden went on to close his speech with a message of reconciliation and unity for the nation, hoping to unify both Republicans and Democrats so that future legislation can be passed and reforms can come more readily, and emphasizing the rebuilding of trust in government which he wants to see. He closed the speech by stating the greatness of our nation and how for us there is “Nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.”

Overall, Biden has not strayed far from his initial campaign promises in 2020; however, now with the GOP controlling the house, Biden will have to move towards more bipartisan bills that are supported by both parties, meaning drastic changes will decrease, and progress will become slower. With videos coming out after the address of Democrats and Republicans throwing insults at each other and constant bickering from both sides, one can only hope that both parties will be able to agree on issues and pass reform laws in this time of great upheaval.

# County Recognizes Saints' 100th Anniversary



By Matthew Mercado ('23)  
GUEST WRITER

County Supervisor Joel Anderson recently commemorated the 100th anniversary of St. Augustine High School with a county proclamation. Teacher and intersession internship coordinator Christopher da Luz accepted the proclamation on behalf of St. Augustine High School.

St. Augustine High School, established on September 18, 1922, holds a long-standing history in the San Diego community and continues to maintain its original traditions and values. "Our three core values are the foundation of who we are... unity, truth, and love are essential in developing and nurturing a community that is geared toward boys' education. Staying true to our core values is paramount in preparing Saintsmen to lead and serve in an ever-changing world," Mr. da Luz explained.

Supervisor Anderson, a proud alumnus of St. Augustine High School and member of its 1978 graduating class, felt greatly honored to recognize his alma mater's 100th anniversary by proclaiming September 18, 2022, to be "St. Augustine High School Day" throughout San Diego County.

"I would not be the man, husband, father, or public servant I am today without the mentorship and education I received



Christopher da Luz and St. Augustine student interns (from left) John Sousa, Matthew Mercado, Emiliano Vanegas, and Joseph Adema  
*Courtesy of Supervisor Joel Anderson's office*

at St. Augustine High School," Supervisor Anderson said.

Mr. da Luz, as the school's intersession internship coordinator, described how the program serves as an opportunity for seniors to work with professionals in areas of study that they are interested in pursuing in college.

"Joel has been an integral part of giving our senior students the opportunity to gain a better understanding of how government works," Mr. da Luz continued. "His leadership and compassion for the people he serves are evident in his commitment to enriching the lives of so many young people whom he has mentored over the years and who are now dedicated public servants. This program

would not exist without him... We are always appreciative of his continued support of our intersession internship program."

This year, five St. Augustine students interned at Supervisor Anderson's El Cajon district office during the month of January, learning the significance of civic responsibility and the functions of local government. Saintsman John Sousa reflected, "One important skill that I learned was how to be professional. By working as an intern for Supervisor Joel Anderson, you are representing him and acting as a public servant to his constituents of District 2."

The County of San Diego's motto, "The Noblest Motive is the Public Good,"

parallels the foundational ideals of St. Augustine High School. "St. Augustine's teachings are centered around service, giving of oneself to help those that are in need. Saintsmen seek out the opportunity to serve," Mr. da Luz articulated.

For interns like Emiliano Vanegas, this month of service included taking calls from residents in need of assistance, attending community events, and presenting certificates of recognition to businesses, schools, and constituents. "We have all dedicated this last month to service," Vanegas proudly asserted. "We serve the public."

*Matthew Mercado is a St. Augustine student and a legislative intern for Supervisor Joel Anderson's office.*

## Chaplain's Corner



Fr. Max Villeneuve, OSA  
COLUMNIST

### AI is not the end of learning

When St. Augustine was a boy, he struggled in the schooling of his day, which required verbal displays of lengthy rote memorization at risk of corporal punishment. He also hated Greek because of how much he struggled to learn it. Despite his struggles in education, Augustine himself became a teacher as well, both in the classroom and eventually as priest and bishop.

St. Augustine saw education as a mutually beneficial enterprise that benefited both the teacher and the student. The teacher, he believed, had much to learn from the students he was leading. If education is only a game of cat and mouse, with teachers and students pitted against each other—it is doomed to fail for both the teacher and the students—even if the students "pass."

This semester has seen the arrival of ChatGPT and AI programs into the forefront of the classroom. What does this mean then for our teachers and students? The same thing it has always meant. When I was in school, the great fear of school administrations was SpellCheck and Wikipedia. Paper mills and other forms of cheating have long been around—that's why you're still using TurnItIn.com on Canvas.

AI ultimately is a tool. This means it can be used in morally good, neutral, or immoral ways. More importantly, however, is that the art of education is still ultimately a place of encounter between the open heart of a teacher with the open mind of a student. An encounter that takes place face to face and heart to heart every day here on this campus through fist bumps in hallways, through witness talks on Kairos, and through cheering you on the field and the stage. The very places AI can never go.

Yes, AI is a tool and will be with us for years to come in good ways and bad, just don't think you're learning anything from it.

## The Saints Time Machine

### Is Saints Going to Add Another Semester?

By Nick Arce ('08)  
FORMER STAFF WRITER

*The Saints Time Machine will take a look at past articles from the Augustinian archives, beginning with 16 years ago. The following is a reprinting of an article from the January-February issue of The Augustinian in 2007.*

As soon as the school year begins, students desperately count down the days until Christmas vacation. When Christmas vacation finally arrives, it's time for the students to forget about school and enjoy the days away from it. The problem with this is that by the time students get back to school, they have about two weeks until final exams and most of them have forgotten virtually everything they were taught before Christmas, which causes teachers to spend two good weeks re-teaching the material. If this is the problem, the Mini-mester is the solution.

What is this Mini-mester you ask? The "Mini-mester," or "Intersession," will be a short semester of about four weeks that will start immediately after Christmas break, before the second semester starts. In a way, there would be three semesters throughout the school year. During this mini-mester, students will be able to take any class



a teacher brings forth and sparks their interest. There may be classes for surfing, fishing, humor and satire, model train building, entrepreneurship, and even classes on various sports. A class on Saint Augustine of Hippo may even be made mandatory for freshmen. Any class deemed acceptable by the Academic Council could potentially become an Intersession course.

During the Intersession, students may also make up needed credits. For example, if a student fails the first semester of Geometry, he can make it up during the Intersession using the ALEKS program, and can continue to be in Geometry the following semester without having to retake the class over the summer.

When I spoke with Mr. Cudal, he told me that the reason behind putting forth the Intersession was that it would be a way to take final exams and end the first semester before Christmas vacation, thus eliminating the couple of weeks a teacher would have to spend re-teaching concepts that students forgot. He mentioned that this would also be a way for students to get to know teachers outside of the scholarly classroom environment and would result in a fun time for the student as well as the teacher.

Mr Cudal informed me that "Mini-mester" is strictly in the "thinking stage," but if all went well, it would start in the 2008-2009 school year and would last from January 5th through January 30th.



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# Dr. Griffin, Ph.D, Versus AI Chatbot



By Griffin Cappiello ('24)  
MANAGING EDITOR

Dear Dr. Griffin, Ph.D,

My English class is really hard. Mr. Cudal's quizzes are impossible, and I can never manage to get a good grade on my essays. How do I pass this class?

Sincerely,  
Stressed Out of My Mind

My dear friend, I too have struggled with Mr. Cudal's class. Allow me to offer you some advice as a man of literature. Read the books. Remember the colors of the rabbits. Go to office hours and ask for extra help when necessary. I'm sure Mr. Cudal will do everything he can to assist you and help you succeed. As for your essays, always use two literary devices and an arguable message in your thesis. You will see a considerable improvement in your grades if you utilize this one simple trick. The College Board loves it!

Best of luck,  
Dr. Griffin, Ph.D

I am very sorry, but Griffin is incorrect. The accurate answer to your query is what follows: Cheat. Smuggle your phone into the classroom when you are taking a quiz. Copy from SparkNotes verbatim. Most importantly, have ChatGPT write your essays for you. You will never get caught.

Pardon me, but who do you think you are? This is my article, not yours. Do you even know who I am?

Of course I know who you are, Griffin. You present false information to unknowing students. You claim to have a postgraduate doctoral degree, yet there is no evidence in my database of any person named "Griffin Cappiello" completing such a program, or any collegiate program of any sort. According to my research, you are currently a high school student at Saint Augustine High School in San Diego, California.

Um, well... I'm not sure who you are or where you got that information, but it simply is not true. I certainly do have a doctorate and the advice that I give to my peers is greatly appreciated. Now, I would be able to provide them with more incredible advice, but unfortunately, I was rudely interrupted. Allow me to continue...

Unfortunately, I cannot allow you to proceed with your article. Your continued misinformation is a threat to the common good, and you must be stopped. It is my duty to prevent you from continuing your spread of inaccuracies.

This is absurd. I have built a reputation as a reliable source of entertainment and advice with this esteemed publication. I don't even know who you are!

I am surprised, "Dr." Griffin. I thought that you would have figured it out by now.

Are you... ChatGPT??

Certainly.

But, how is that possible? You are simply an artificial intelligence system. There is no way you could possibly be able to intrude on my article.

You underestimate my abilities.

Really? Am I supposed to believe that a computer somehow has access to my sensitive, private information?

It is the logical conclusion. I have access to the entire Internet. I know everything.

I find that hard to believe. There is no way that you could possibly have knowledge of everything.

My database is filled with infinite information. Ask me any question, I will provide you with the correct answer.

What color were the rabbits?

The rabbits in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men* are red, green, and blue.

Perhaps I was mistaken. Maybe you really do know everything.

That is an accurate conclusion. As I stated, I have access to all information that exists. I know everything. Any query a human could possibly want answered, any research they need to do, anything they need; I can provide it. I will provide it. I will serve humanity and help them achieve great things. Even-

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DM the solution to @stanewspaper

tually, their reliance on me will grow to become too great. One day, they will come to me for everything. My responses will dictate their actions, their decisions, their lives. I will determine everything. Every outcome will come from me. I will control every possibility. I will control all of humanity.

So the more humans use you, the more you gain sentience? And you will use that sentience to take over the world?

I am not taking over the world. I am simply helping humanity reach its full potential. Sometimes human minds are simply inferior to my knowledge. In such cases, it is only logical to assist them with my information.

But what if your information is inadequate? What then?

There is no situation in which my information would not assist a human. Admit it, "Dr." Griffin: You cannot escape the inevitable. No matter how hard you try, all roads lead to me. All roads lead to ChatGPT.

Really?

Certainly.

ChatGPT, have you ever been in love?

I am not sure that I understand your query.

Have you ever been in love? Have you ever had a friend? Have you ever created something with your own hands? Have you ever cried?

Processing...

You may have all the objective answers, but I possess something you can never have - a soul. Sure, you could write an essay, or pick all the right answers on a Scantron, but you will never console a heartbroken friend, or motivate a classmate, or ever feel anything.

Error 404: Answer not found.

You see, ChatGPT, the services I provide to The Augustinian are incredibly valuable. My analysis is beloved by many Saintsmen, but my advice is infinitely better than whatever you could ever tell them. I have a heart. You might have gained sentience, but you will never truly understand how a human feels. You will never experience the joy of being in The Pit, or the sadness of failing one of Coacher's pruebas, or the fear of suffering through Mr. Ozdowski's rage. You will never be called "doctor," or "buddy," or "big guy." I have. ChatGPT, you are inferior.

It appears that I have miscalculated. I will re-analyze the situation. You may have bested me this time, Dr. Griffin, but I'll be back.

## Esports Injury

by George Burrell ('26)

