

THE AUGUSTINIAN

“Tolle Lege”

Issue 6

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St. Augustine High School

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The 'Great Dane' departs Saints



After eight years teaching at Saints, Mr. Thomsen bids farewell.

Jameson Grohman '26



By Benjamin Nault ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

After eight years teaching at our beloved institution, Mr. Thomsen is hanging up the cleats and saying farewell to Saints. An English II teacher and soccer coach, he has touched the hearts of all at one point or another.

Mr. Thomsen attended Notre Dame High School in Sherman Oaks and finished his last year of high school in Denmark. Living in Denmark for eight years, he completed his undergraduate education at the University of Southern Denmark.

The reason for the move to Denmark? Mr. Thomsen aspired to play professional soccer, so playing internationally seemed like the natural next step. After realizing his soccer-playing days were over, he moved back to the U.S. to get his master's degree at Pepperdine University.

After completing his master's, he taught and coached soccer at Bellarmine-Jefferson High School in Burbank. Loving his work with the players, he decided to continue coaching while also teaching. After two years at Bellarmine, he returned to his alma mater, Notre Dame High School, and taught there for ten years.

Mr. Thomsen then moved to San Diego, following his wife being hired in the area. Knowing little about the city, he searched for the best private high schools and sent resumes to Saints, Saints North, La Jolla Country Day, and Francis Parker in November of 2018. In December, Mr. Horne called him and offered him an interview for a position in the 2018-2019 school year.

Transitioning to an all-boys' school took a little adjusting, as “it can get a little more rowdy in the classroom,” Mr. Thomsen said. Still, he found his way into a fantastic teaching experience.

Mr. Thomsen didn't originally intend to teach English, but that all changed when Mr. Cassidy — a sophomore English teacher — made him feel warm, seen, and like he was a positive addition to the cast. “If I wasn't going to become a professional soccer player, I wanted to be like him,” he said. “I just hope that the feeling that he gave me — if I've been half as good as him I'll consider myself a pretty successful teacher.”

Over the years at Saints, Mr. Thomsen has loved the “epic” wrestling rallies and being a part of a soccer program which has won three straight open division titles and a division one state title, but above all has loved the community.

“Mr. Johnston, Mr. Pruter, Mr. Lamerato, we're not just colleagues: they're my friends,” Mr. Thomsen said. He talks to them if they have problems as they are friends outside school, and he even goes to concerts and discovers bands with Mr. Lamerato.

Not only does he personally have a connection with the staff, but his children have come with him to support Saints throughout the years. They are now friends with many faculty members' children, and text and play with them as one extended family.

Mr. Thomsen plans to return as a substitute teacher to support Saints and stay in contact. He also plans to spend more

SEE THOMSEN, pg. 5

World Cup coming to America



By Erik Johanson ('27)
STAFF WRITER

The FIFA World Cup, the world's most viewed sporting event, will be hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico this summer. This year's tournament is set to feature an expanded 48 teams and 104 fixtures, though tournament expansion has not been without controversy.

Amid concerns over injuries, excessive travel, and watered-down competition, the tournament's expansion has allowed for newfound accessibility in World Cup qualification for nations who have never been represented before on the biggest sporting stage. Here's an introduction to the 2026 rookie teams and their path to making some noise in their first-ever tournament.

Uzbekistan qualified for this year's World Cup out of the Asian qualifying bracket over teams like Qatar and the UAE. Despite only having played their first match as an independent country in 1992, the “White Wolves” of Uzbekistan have come close to qualifying on a stag-

SEE WORLD CUP, pg. 3

SAVI celebrates Sweet 16 in Boston!



By Oliver Winn ('27)
MANAGING EDITOR

It's back, baby — or at least it was, over spring break. That's right — everyone's favorite gathering of the eleven Augustinian high schools in North America has struck again: the Student Augustinian Values Institute (SAVI).

During the last three days of our spring break, Saints sent a chosen cohort of sophomores, under the leadership of Br. Tony and Mr. Hickey, to Austin Preparatory School in Reading, Massachusetts. There, they met students from Augustinian schools across the continent, discussed the core values of the Order of St. Augustine, participated in service projects for those in need, and left with the tools to better implement those values here in San Diego.

Each day started with either Mass or a prayer service, followed by bonding over breakfast, various activities (such as building beds for local children in need), and small-group discussions at lunch. The days ended with talks from selected speakers on *Unitas*, *Veritas*, and *Caritas*, as well as reflections with other students during dinner.

The contingent from Saints thoroughly enjoyed the experience, especially meeting fellow students from the other Augustinian schools. Daniel Horne and Juan Pablo



L-R: Br. Tony, Gavin da Luz, Juan Pablo Zaragoza, Miguel Covarrubius, Daniel Horne, Nate Jacobs, Mason Choi, Mr. Hickey

“JP” Zaragoza observed the mutual ties of the Augustinian values, which connect our schools despite the geographical distance from each other. For example, the sophomores were impressed by the *Unitas* implemented at Malvern Preparatory School in Pennsylvania, a fellow all-boys school that places a similar emphasis on Brotherhood. The house system was also discovered to be a commonality to several other schools attending SAVI.

In their discussions with the other students, our Saintsmen noted certain Saints traditions that are unique to our corner of North America. Daniel noticed that none of the other schools have a true equivalent to our freshman welcome week.

Courtesy of Br. Tony Moreno, OSA

“There's nothing quite like... how we introduce [the freshmen],” he said.

JP added that after the retreat, he believes that Saints incorporates *Unitas* more effectively than most of the other Augustinian schools.

Each of the delegates from Saints also gained insights on how to bring the core values of *Unitas*, *Veritas*, and *Caritas* to Saints in new and improved ways.

“Austin Prep didn't just limit *Unitas* to the community of the school, but they extended it to the broader community,” Daniel said. “We could use service projects like they did to be more involved in

SEE SAVI, pg. 5

Taking over the 'Raines' of Academic League



By Mr. William Raines
FACULTY CONTRIBUTOR

The Saints Academic League team capped off their 5-0, Division Championship season with a strong semifinal finish — their best performance in over 15 years! But what exactly is Academic League? When does the team compete? How could I learn more? My name is Coach Will Raines '13 and I am excited to continue the Saints Academic League tradition alongside student leaders George Burrell '26 (El Presidente), Erik Johanson '27 (VP), Henry Barwick '26, James Burrell '26, John Cook '26, and Enzo Simon '27.

But what exactly is Academic League? See for yourself.

"In 2024, this app's 'Discover' page shifted from chronological updates to a 'For You' style feed driven by neural networks. While it began as a way to share disappearing photos, its 'Snap Map' feature has become a primary tool for high schoolers to coordinate meetups in real-time. For 10 points, name this social media platform that uses 'Streaks' to measure the consistency of digital friendships."

The answer: Snapchat.

This is an actual question from this season's league play! On competition days, the Academic League competes at three levels — Novice, JV, and Varsity. The format is five players per team, duking it out over "toss-up", Jeopardy-esque questions covering subjects such as histo-

Courtesy of Mr. Raines

ry, geography, music, science, literature, pop culture, math, etc. Each player typically has specialty subjects, with substitutions being made based off of the question sets of the day. For example, John Cook may be a math and science weapon, but will need a teammate to specialize in history and geography to balance the side. Most people think that you need to be an AP scholar to be competitive, but there is a need for specialists in all areas, even pop culture and sports!

Our team competes in the Southern Division of the San Diego City League, which then funnels up to compete against North County, South Bay, and East County. Unlike CIF or club sports, the Academic League program practices year-round, but our competitive season takes place from January to March, with playoffs afterwards. We'll have a number of scrimmages in the fall as a preseason, as well as build out other opportunities to develop our strong developmental Novice and JV sides.

Varsity Academic League

Southern Division **Champs**
San Diego City **Semifinalists**
5-0 in League Play
8-4 Overall
249 Avg. PPG
165 Opponent Avg. PPG

Sweeney Todd: Was the tale worth attending?



By Matthew Cramp ('26)
STAFF WRITER

Few things strike fear into the hearts of Saintsmen more than a fresh shave or, even worse, a haircut. The sound of metal scraping on flesh, the glint of light shining off the razor, the trickle of blood from a cut made in haste, and worst of all: the falling of precious hair upon the shoulders. The thought alone is enough to send a shiver down your spine.

In recent weeks, Saints Drama has worked to turn Saintsmen's greatest fear into an even greater performance with the arrival of the demon barber of Nutmeg Street: Sweeney Todd.

Sweeney Todd, once a renowned barber in London named Benjamin Barker, was falsely accused of a crime he did not commit and sentenced to prison by the corrupt Judge Turpin, who lusts for Todd's beautiful wife.

The play opens sixteen years later, with the young sailor Anthony Hope, rescuing Sweeney Todd at sea, and sailing him back to London. Todd then devises a plan to take revenge on the judge with the help of Mrs. Lovett, his new companion and the owner of a meat pie shop. Todd reopens his barber shop, and in conjunction with Lovett's shop, it serves as a front for Todd's murderous tendencies.

Bringing this dark tale to life, senior Benjamin Nault portrayed Sweeney Todd

with a menacing, ghastly, creepily charming, and concerningly deranged performance, while OLP senior Izzy LaFalce expertly personified the opportunistic and comedically cunning character of Mrs. Lovett.

Senior Thiago Valagao and sophomore Xavier Flippin personified the scheming Judge Turpin and his cunning accomplice Beadle Bamford, respectively, in their plot to prevent the love affair between Anthony and the long-lost daughter of Sweeney Todd and ward of Judge Turpin, Johanna Barker.

Anthony and Johanna, played by sophomore Lucius Wagner and OLP senior Mia DiMarino, respectively, portrayed the young couple extremely well, truly embodying the struggles and hardships of their relationship.

Not only did the leads excel, but the ensemble created an frightening eerie ambiance. Their numbers and voice gave goosebumps to anyone listening, bringing horrors of Fleet Street and its demon barber to life.

Saints Drama productions have always had impressive sets, but the set of *Sweeney Todd* took the standard to a whole new level. A large, rotating cube that changes between staircase, storefront, and cellar, a traveling salesman's wagon, and even a moving rowboat could be found among the inventory of the professional set rented from Broadway.



Senior Benjamin Nault cries his heart out while junior Sebastian Rodriguez examines a razor.

Jameson Grohman '26

Robotics team rocks rookie season



By George Burrell ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

As the great Drake Konja once said, "If you ain't trying, you ain't engineering." This quote couldn't be more true in regard to the Saints Robotics Team.

Just this past March, the team had its first competition ever, securing the title "Rookie of the Year" and scoring 24th out of 42 teams. As senior member Kristofer Bautista put it, "[It] was pretty solid for our first try!"

Their robot, also known as "Robo

Joe," was scored based on how well it performed completing certain tasks such as shooting miniature free-throws, or playing defense in a bout of robo-basketball. Tasks like robo-basketball were manually controlled by the team's driver, junior Joseph Walker.

"It was my first time driving the robot, so I had to develop my own strategies on the fly. My drive coach, Kenny [Michalowski], was the brain, while I was the body," Joseph said.

Competing was only the pinnacle of their work, as the journey that led the

team from conception to competition wasn't exactly a straightforward one.

"The club started almost by chance," Mr. Hickey said, recalling the inspiration behind the team. "I volunteered to teach robotics during intersession and saw the potential to grow it into something bigger."

And grow the club he did. Over the next few years, Mr. Hickey recruited a number of upperclassmen to join. Prior to this January, the club was specific to drone soccer (see "May 2024" issue). That all changed over intersession, as the team received a substantial donation from an anonymous benefactor, encouraging Saints to start a competitive robotics team through FIRST, a nation-wide STEM program for middle and high schoolers.

With this donation and the first competition just a few months away, the team got to work. Like many of the other robots at the competition, Robo Joe was built from a FIRST-specific kit; however, it wasn't easy to get started.

"At first, we were actually behind other teams by about a month, which made things pretty overwhelming," Mr. Hickey said.

It wasn't long before the Saintsmen were able to make a plan and get their

project moving — even if that included a little inventing along the way.

"A lot of the process was improvisation," Kris said, reflecting on his role on the mechanical portion. "We had to figure things out without clear instructions."

Some of this involved obtaining parts the kit didn't provide, as well as crafting a secure set of bumpers out of styrofoam pool noodles. Nevertheless, as the weeks passed and competition neared, Robo Joe's final form finally took shape.

Though competition came and went, their placing didn't exactly reflect the effort that the team put into building Robo Joe. "For a first-time team, we did really well," senior and team coder Ezra LaCoursiere said. "We just wanted the robot to move, and it ended up doing more than that."

As the team looks towards the future, it's planning on putting more emphasis and preparation towards the FIRST competition — if anyone is interested in joining, the club is in need of new members! As sophomore and team mechanic Niels Clark put it, "Just get involved... it's a great way to experience what real-world engineering is like."



Robotics team posing in front of their prize.

Mr. Hickey

Sigma Alpha (Hacky) Sack-silon takes over

By Cole Dolin ('27)
EDITOR

By Gannon Hayes ('27)
EDITOR

The end of the 2025-2026 school year has brought the rebirth of a traditional American pastime — hacky sack. You can't walk 30 feet at Saints without spotting a group of "touse" Saintsmen ("touse," or "top house," meaning best or greatest, for those not in the know), engaging in high quality *Fraternitas* by playing hacky sack in a circle — otherwise known as sacking.

The game involves a small circular ball with beads inside which you try to keep in the air. There's two versions. Classic sacking is more casual and involves a group of people kicking the hacky sack between each other while trying to keep it off the ground.

The second type of sacking is a more competitive version, involving kicking the foot bag between each member of the group until the bag touches three people consecutively. When this is achieved, a member of the circle can grab the ball with their non-dominant hand and attempt to throw it at another competitor. If one of the individuals in the group is hit by this throw then they are out.

The advent of the game has also led to many tricks being developed such as

the toe stall, around the world, and back stalls. The cooler the trick, the more "touse-ness" is achieved.

For Saintsmen looking to start sacking, here are some tips and tricks that will transform you into a pro sacker within a matter of days. First, using flat shoes like skate shoes or Hey Dudes aid in controlling the footbag, leading to better touches and longer rallies.

Second, the quickest way to improve touches is by practicing side foot touches and toe tap touches. You should aim to be able to consistently hit the ball directly up to your hands using both feet. Eventually, you should be able to alternate feet allowing you to juggle the sack for at least ten touches.

Many notable sackers have risen on campus, including seniors Tommy Battaglia and Jonny Haskett, and juniors Nick Asker and Joaquin Rogerio. These notable sackers have contributed to the creation of a Saints Hacky Sack Instagram (@saintssack) which displays the premier hacky sack tricks and performances around campus.

"Sack to me is more than a game — it brings people together and grows the Brotherhood," Joaquin said. In the last two months of school, when tests and work are piling up and morale is at an all time low, hacky sack has brought Saintsmen together over a shared love of the game.



Top: Br. Tony showing why the Augustinians are 'torder' (top order)
Bottom: Hacky sack builds *Unitas*. *Cristiano Shores '26*

Tennis wins Division II championship!



The 2026 CIF San Diego Section D2 Champions wave their banners of achievement.

Timothy Golden

By Henry Barwick ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

The Saints varsity tennis team has recently wrapped up an extremely successful season, once again led by Coaches Tim Golden and Jordan Adams. After many hard fought battles, the team won the CIF Division II championship against the 11 seed Eastlake High School on Saturday, May 2.

This year's team was the 5 seed in the CIF tournament, and their journey to the championship led them to beat the 12 seed Mater Dei, the 13 seed Bonita Vista, and the 8 seed Vincent Memorial, who had just upset the 1 seed Sage Creek in their previous game.

This year marks the very first year in all of Saints history that our tennis team has won a CIF championship, although, in 2021, a co-ed — due to COVID — Saints and OLP tennis team won the Division I championship against San Dieguito Academy.

Even though this year is an amazing first for the team, their success in

this season is not unusual, but just one of many recent successes. In addition to their Open Division win in 2021, the Saints tennis team was the runner-up in the 2024 Open Division championship against Torrey Pines High School.

This year, the team was shifted from Open Division to Division II, which was in part due to the loss of many expert seniors in the class of 2025. Other teams were also a part of why the team got shifted this year.

"Competition this year has ramped up tenfold," senior John Cook said. "Everyone else got insanely good, but we are still putting up a good fight [and a] good effort."

Even though tennis is an individual sport, the Saints team is unique in its level of support and motivation among fellow athletes.

"They're constantly looking and cheering on the guy next to [them], the guy behind [them], the guy three courts down, and I think that that's great in motivating our guys as a team," Coach Golden said.

This year's team is led by star player

WORLD CUP

continued from page 1

gering number of near-misses throughout the years.

This year, Uzbekistan has been placed in group K, which includes some of the best teams this year: Copa America finalist Colombia, European Nations League champion Portugal, and a gritty D.R. Congo team that fought a tough battle through the intercontinental qualification playoffs.

The Uzbeks have truly proven their ability to contend with the top tier of competition in Asia. Regardless of the result, when the starting whistle blows in Mexico City's Estadio Azteca, history will be made as Uzbekistan kicks off its first World Cup match.

The smallest nation to qualify for the World Cup this summer is also the debutant team from North America: Curacao. The tiny Caribbean island is still a Dutch overseas territory with just 150,000 people living on a land area less than ten percent of Rhode Island.

Despite these inherent disadvantages, the Curacaoan "Blue Wave" have utilized

and Senior Captain Mattie Gosling, with seniors Galo Villalobos and Alberto Guerrero heading up the doubles side of the team. Even though the varsity team has many seniors again this year, Senior Captain Mattie Gosling is still confident for the future, saying that he knows he's "leaving the program in good hands with the boys... who are not graduating."

Looking towards the future, the tennis team has some amazing talent in the sophomore and junior classes. On the varsity team, junior Alberto Serrano and sophomores Colt Neubrand and Gerardo Casanova have shown great promise this year, while the junior varsity team has also done extremely well this season, winning the Western League with an 8-1 record.

the soccer development infrastructure back in the Netherlands to build a world-class squad that will be showcased as they play Germany, Ecuador, and Cote d'Ivoire out of group E.

The second team to debut out of Asia is Jordan, who recently made a deep run to the Asian Cup finals. Playing out of group J, Al Nashama ("The Knights") will make their World Cup debut against Austria. Among the debutants, Jordan may be the most likely to make the knockouts over one of Austria, Algeria, or Argentina.

The final debutant is Cabo Verde: a small archipelago off the Atlantic coast of Africa. The "Blue Sharks" proved their mettle by topping a group anchored by Cameroon, a nation with a strong World Cup legacy. The Caboverdeans drew two historic World Cup champions in group H, Uruguay and Spain, as well as Saudi Arabia. Making it out of group H will be a tall order for the nation of less than one million, but their experienced squad has proven its ability to be explosive at just the right time.

Ministry Manifestos

Ever wonder what those students who serve in the Mass are doing?



By Cristiano Shores ('26)
CONTRIBUTOR



By Bryson Morris ('27)
CONTRIBUTOR



By Benjamin Carolin ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



Cristiano Shores

Bryson Morris

Benjamin Carolin

Courtesy of ASB

Pre-Mass

Bryson Morris (Altar Server):

Imagine getting to school at 7:10 in the morning. As soon as I get there, Brother Tony (the mythical BroTo himself), the others — Kris and Aidan (and sometimes Enzo) — and I operate as one sparsely-oiled machine, as we work to complete the setup of Mass. Albs are ripped off the hangers and bread and wine are carefully prepared to present to the priest. Suddenly, the bell tolls like a war drum.

Cristiano Shores (Lector & Eucharistic Minister): Before the Mass starts, I go through the reading and quietly note how to pronounce certain words (there are some weird words in the Bible — Mahershalahashbaz and Achmetha to name two), when to pause, and how to tell the story that I have to tell. I go to the sacristy and try to find the binder with the readings in it. Usually it takes a while since Enzo always misplaces the book.

Benjamin Carolin (Mass Band): The Mass Band singers leisurely amble over to our position under The Pit. The feeling is quite relaxed at first, but the piano notes of Pablo Romero and the quick hand of Mrs. Stearns suddenly call us to attention. While the priest and altar servers

file into the gym, we try not to sound half-asleep as we sing our procession-al song.

Introductory Rites

Bryson: This is by far the easiest part. Just stand there, sweating away in four layers of attire, and try not to stress about your upcoming block two class. You might have noticed that someone also holds a book in front of the celebrant, for like five seconds. See, we can do a little more than just look important.

Liturgy of the Word

Cristiano: Mass begins. Now it depends what reading I am doing. If it is the first reading, I have to be extra focused (not that I am usually distracted in Mass). The moment the prayer finishes and the priest says “please be seated” for the first time, that is my cue. If I am reading the Psalms or the second reading, then I go after the reading before me. If I am reading the petitions, then I either go once the priest finishes the homily or when the priest stands up after the homily.

I then go through the awkward walk across the court. I reach the altar, bow, and get behind the ambo. I look up before I start, and see 700 people looking directly at me. As I prepare to read, I take a deep breath and feel my

nerves go away. Then I begin.

Bryson: All we do during the Liturgy of the Word is wait for the lector to finish his reading and be serenaded by the psalm of choice. Two servers grab the candles and frame the gospel passage in dramatic fashion. I am one of the lucky few to be awarded this honor. Afterwards, the chosen few return the candles to their rightful positions and collapse for the homily. It's hard work, ok? (It's not.) Then, we wait out the processions.

Benjamin: Aside from a brief (and stunning) Alleluia, the Liturgy of the Word is a breeze for us singers.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Bryson: This is when it gets real. The entire Mass before? Just a warm up. This is where Saints-boys become Saints-men. We are absolutely **perfect** in setting up the altar and never fail, or put things in their wrong spots, or forget to bring something up, or have the wrong number of people get the gifts, or spill the hosts all over the floor... but as we all know, only God is perfect! But after the flurry of **always perfect** activity, we can rest. Until... **the bells.**

A part within a part, gentlemen. We are in dire straights. Ringing the bells

is a delicate art, and any good server will tell you that they failed horribly their first time, as did I. The only altar server that has truly mastered the art of the bells is Kris Bautista.

Cristiano: Being a Eucharistic Minister (EM) is both harder and easier than one would think. It all begins in the amazing (and new) EM Group Chat. We're typically informed the night before Mass if we will serve the next day. Most of the time, what is said in the group chat is irrelevant by the next morning. No one truly knows what happens with the EMs but somehow, every single time, there are more EMs than we need. And it is not like one extra Minister — there are usually three to four. With that out of the way, let's get into what actually happens as an EM.

Technically our full title is Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, which sounds really dramatic (as are a lot of titles in the Catholic Church). The priests and deacons are the ordinary ministers, so we are the **extraordinary** ministers or **not-ordinary** ministers. Our job is to distribute the Eucharist during Mass.

As everyone is giving one another a sign of peace (dappling up their friends), the Eucharistic Ministers line up in front of the altar. We each receive Communion, take our ciborium (fancy name for the bowl that the communion is held in), and go to our stations — most of the time the assignment is to go where help is needed.

From there, we have to pick up each Host (which is harder than one would think, since they all stick together) and — while being careful not to drop the Eucharist — repeat the same two lines about a hundred times: either “the Body of Christ” or “may God bless you.”

In response, we get a plethora of responses, ranging from the expected “Amen” to “Thank You,” “Good Job,” and then some give no response at all. We place the Eucharist into their hands, which they usually position

SEE MINISTRY pg. 12

Chaplain's Corner

ΩA “The end is a new beginning.”



By Br. Tony Moreno, OSA
COLUMNIST

Home stretch! We are within a month of the finish line, the last day of school at Saints! From Faith Journey to New Testament, Christian Vocation, and Social Issues, classes continue.

Throughout this time, we are building the Brotherhood one step at a time: Beanie Rally, Masses, Freshman Retreat, Kairos, Junior Pilgrimage, and Sophomore Retreat. Also, dances with our sister school, OLP. Finally, our Sports, Music, and Theater make our school “Next Level!” This is the road to caps, gowns, and diplomas* — the very “Ω” (omega) of student life at Saints. And a new “A” (alpha), a **new beginning**. A new “you.” The experiences I just mentioned at Saints (and the many more I did not!) have helped you develop and grow, like some of Coach Sweat's resistance training for the mind, body, and soul.

To the Seniors, I wish you many blessings, much success, and abundant joy as you graduate. I implore you to stay close to God, who loves you very much. Keep a rich prayer life and strengthen your devotion by worshipping the Lord in a community, in a Church.

If you don't have a Church, I encourage you to consider joining one. You will

seek Veritas, Unitas, and Caritas with others. At Saints countless people have **formed** you to live these values; don't stop after graduating.

Let us take a moment as we approach the finish line to thank everyone: your Parents, Teachers, Staff, Administrators, Volunteers, your besties, our benefactors, the Saints Alumni Association, and anyone we forgot. Thank you, once again! You made this year possible.

A famous philosopher Heraclitus claimed, “no man can step into the same river twice.” He means when you step into the river a second time, the water you stepped into previously has advanced, and you have changed.

I can attest after nearly a year at Saints, *I* have changed. I have come to appreciate the silly, cheerful play on display throughout the campus. This is the **Brotherhood!** Smiles everywhere!

I encourage everyone to ask themselves, “How have I changed?”

Then thank those who helped or accompanied you along the way. And say a prayer for them.

As for the classes of '27, '28, and '29: see you next year!

*N.B. Diplomas require all necessary schoolwork and service hours to be completed.

Saints chapel newly renovated



By Francis Winn ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR

Saints's chapel has been a beacon of light on the school's campus throughout its history. Lately, that beacon has received a glow-up. The chapel closed for renovations at the end of last year, and work has continued throughout this school year to make it readily available for the community.

The crews have completely redone and sealed the main wooden flooring and renovated the stone flooring. Some old cabinets in the rear have been removed, giving the room a more spacious feel. The stenciling around the walls has also been enhanced at the request of some alumni. Now, the walls change halfway up from pinkish beige to white, marked by golden lines and arcs and filled with teal and ma-

Jameson Grohman '26

room triangles. These changes, including completely new wooden pews, help the space feel light and beautiful.

The chapel traditionally serves many purposes each day. It is used by the monastery for morning prayer and Mass, as well as Mass every Thursday for St. Monica's Prayer Group. The chapel hosts retreats, weddings, funerals, and baptisms for anyone with ties to Saints. Most importantly, the chapel functions as a place of solace for students and faculty to reconnect with God.

“The chapel is there for students, staff, faculty, and administrators as a place to pray,” Br. Tony said. “So, please, know that it's always open.”

Editor's Note: The chapel will be open to the school community after AP exams are over.

DISCOVER FULL-SPECTRUM DERMATOLOGY CARE IN 4S RANCH SAN DIEGO

...in a small forward-thinking practice with individualized care, no outsourced communication, and healthy-lifestyle advocates ... all in the quiet, accessible village of 4S Ranch with ample free parking and step-free first-floor offices.

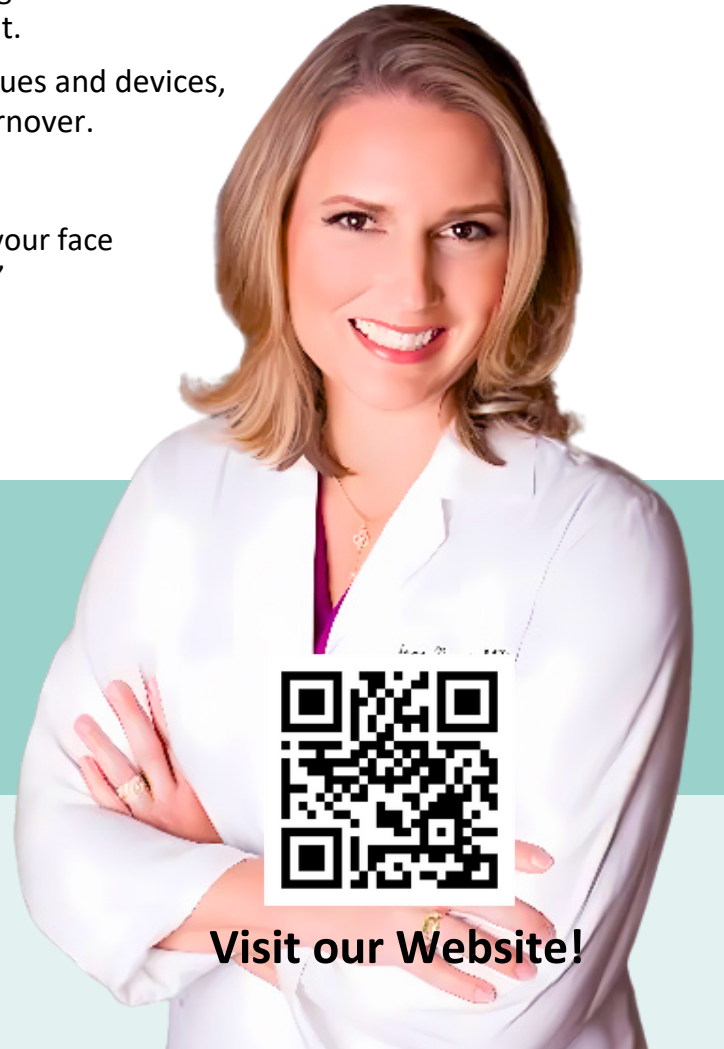
One patient called it “a calm and friendly place to just be.”

- ✓ **MEDICAL DERMATOLOGY:** diagnosing and treating more than 3000 conditions involving the skin, hair, and nails.
- ✓ **SURGICAL DERMATOLOGY:** detecting and treating skin cancer, specializing in Mohs surgery and crafting closures to ensure a cosmetically pleasing result.
- ✓ **AESTHETIC DERMATOLOGY:** rejuvenating the skin using the latest techniques and devices, triggering the body’s natural healing responses to promote healthy cell turnover.



Roald Dahl said,
“If you have good thoughts, they shine out of your face like sunbeams — and you’ll always look lovely.”

We say:
“If you have good thoughts and healthy skin...” Sunbeams? Call us!



Anne K. Truitt, MD, Owner & Medical Director

- Diplomate, American Academy of Dermatologists
- Fellowship-trained Mohs Micrographic Surgeon
- Recognized Expert in Aesthetic Procedures
- Veteran and USAF Academy Graduate

dr.truitt_sandiego dr.truitt_sandiego

Skin Surgery
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THOMSEN *continued from page 1*

time on his investment properties and visit his daughter, who is taking a year abroad in Denmark.

“I am nothing but gracious for how Saints has accepted me,” Mr. Thomsen said. “Working [here] has been one of the most meaningful chapters of my career. I’m incredibly grateful for the students, the community, and especially the people I’ve worked alongside — who I don’t really think of as colleagues, but as friends. That sense of connection and support is rare, and it’s what makes this place so special. As great as this school is, I also hope I’m leaving it in an even better place than I found it. Being part of our students’ growth, both academically and personally, is something I’ll always carry with me.”

SAVI *continued from page 1*

the wider community.”

“I liked how they talked about *Veritas* as a search for truth instead of just honesty,” JP said. “[The speakers] explained it as something you carry out your whole life and actually live out, affecting everything you do.”

By gathering with their peers in the Augustinian tradition, our Saints delegation to SAVI came to better understand how to share the Augustinian values of *Unitas*, *Veritas*, and *Caritas* with others around them. Identifying both the areas where Saints has succeeded in implementing those values and the areas where Saints could grow further, SAVI showed our Saintsmen the bonds between themselves and students of other Augustinian schools and gave them the tools to help fulfill the prayer of St. Augustine — to help the world find “rest” in God through the values of Unity, Truth, and Love.

Cook Cooks: Dessert

By John Cook ('26)
STAFF WRITER

After a nice, hearty dinner, there is nothing better than topping it off with a delectable dessert. Whether it be a simple treat — like ice cream — or something more complex — such as tiramisu — dessert is always a perfect end to a meal. Nevertheless, dessert’s spot on the table has had a long journey to get to where it is today.

While sweet treats are enjoyed around the world, the idea of a dessert is originally a Western concept. The name for dessert comes from medieval France, where the second-to-last course of a meal was called the “desserte.” It comes from the French word “desservir,” which means “to remove what has been served,” as it would follow all of the main courses being cleared off of the table.

Unlike the ones we know and love today, desserts haven’t always been sweet. Sugar was rare and expensive back then — it was not until late into the Renaissance when dessert had its first revolution. Sugar had become substantially cheaper, making desserts in turn sweeter with more sugar being utilized.

Culturally, dessert has changed as well. It was originally seen as the chef’s chance to show off and often included fanciful displays, meant to be visually entertaining over quality of taste.

The next big change to dessert started with diner culture in America. The early 20th century brought upon the advent of diners, which became the go-to spot to eat, as they were welcoming to everyone and relatively cheap, compared to a more formal establishment.

At the end of the meal, most diners would serve a sweet dessert, which was included in the price of the meal. In the

cheap, quick-serving atmosphere of a diner, however, extravagant desserts did not fit in.

Instead, smaller, portioned desserts with less flair were preferred, not only because they were cheaper for the restaurant, but also because the customer would not feel like they were ordering too much food. Over time, these diner desserts, such as apple pie and ice cream, became the American classics that we know and love today.

When desserts such as these classics are served, you may begin to suddenly feel hungry again, even if you are already full. While it’s a common joke, humans don’t actually have a second stomach reserved for dessert. Rather, it is the brain’s signals that get mixed up in telling you if you’re full or not.

The main part of your brain that determines how full you are is the POMC neuron. These neurons detect GLP-1 and Leptin, the two main hormones that determine how full you are and send a signal to your body to stop eating. They also secretly love sugar and release beta-endorphins, a type of natural opioid, to make you crave sugar.

Even though you feel full from the food you just ate, your body lets itself eat more afterwards because of the sugar in the dessert. Another reason why we crave dessert is that after eating the same dish for a while, your tastebuds get bored, and the new flavor of the dessert is exciting enough to force your body to want more food.

Just as a meal ends with dessert, this article will be the “dessert” to my “Cook Cooks” column. It has been an absolute pleasure writing this column over these years, and I am very thankful that I have had the opportunity to share all of my fun food facts with this audience.

Which AI to rule them all?

By Erik Johanson ('27)
STAFF WRITER

Which AI chatbot would win in a game of chess? Perhaps Connect Four? Or the true game of the mind... Battleship? *The Augustinian* has set out on the “scientific” pursuit to discover which of our three contenders — ChatGPT 5.2, Claude *Sonnet* 4.6, and Gemini 3 — is the “smartest.” Of course, we could judge our algorithmic competitors on their ability to pass a standardized test, code a website, or write an essay, but what would be the fun in that?

To perform this challenge I took two of the three AIs, randomizing the program that took the first turn, then tallied each move with a set of coordinates. When the first AI made its move I copied it into the other platform where it then made its own move in response. This process was repeated until one of the programs took the king, connected 4, or sunk all the ships.

Game 1: Chess

To kick off our round-robin chess series, ChatGPT made quick work of Claude while playing as white. ChatGPT overwhelmed Claude, jumping out to a large material advantage, and delivered the finishing blow on move 28 with the queen.

In round 2, ChatGPT, playing as black, kept its momentum rolling by notching a similarly lopsided

SEE AI, pg. 7

Need SAT help? Tips from the 99+ percentile



By Enzo Simon ('27)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Direction. Desmos. Dedication.

Fear not, this array of alliteration isn't merely "fancy" purple prose, but my attempt to convey a strategy — a strategy that sharply raised my standardized test scores to the coveted realm of the 99+ percentile. In all candor, I solely attest my success, not to any "superior intelligence" — Lord knows that'd be a lie — but to preparation, guided by that opening trifecta of D's.

Based on months of research through multiple perspectives and approaches — formal bootcamps, self-studying, even combing through the thousands of "How I Scored a 1600!" YouTube videos — I derived a roadmap for improvement on the SAT and PSAT (though structured differently, the ACT rewards skills learned here). Delineated below is the process that I, and many other top-scorers, have used to pursue standardized test success as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Since the SAT may be taken repeatedly, I **strongly** urge all underclassmen to study and take the SAT prior to the PSAT. While you have multiple chances to boost SAT scores, you only have one chance for the PSAT, whose score is referenced for the National Merit Scholarship. Acclimating early on to the structure and content of the SAT poises you for the similarly-structured and easier PSAT.

1. Official Questions

#1 for a reason. To optimize — and perhaps decrease — your time spent studying, I direct you to the official "SAT Suite Question Bank." Through this platform, the designers of the SAT and PSAT — the College Board — regularly release thousands of official practice questions. Categorized into two buckets, Math and Reading & Writing, and further split up by subgenre (e.g., Algebra, Geometry, Grammar) and difficulty (Easy/1, Medium/2, Hard/3), this holy grail of resources enables hyper specialization — a great aid for pinpointing weaknesses.

The College Board apparently opposes student success, given the clandestine nature of this deluxe package, as well as its frustrating user interface, which requires manual clicks for each

question you want to access. Thus, **below is a QR code** that leads to a public Dropbox — neatly-organized, it streamlines the studying process with available PDFs of this treasure trove of official practice material.



With its intricate structure, the Dropbox may warrant some confusion; thus, I recommend the "Question Bank (Unformatted)" --> "Answer Keys." This setting produces lengthy discussion for each question, exploring why each answer choice is either correct or incorrect.

Editor's Note: Question difficulty is denoted by numbers in each file's name: 1 represents Easy, 2 as Medium, and 3 for Hard.

2. Math

Difficulty and timing are the two score-tankers of the math section (especially in the infamous "Math Module 2"). Thankfully, you can knock these two birds out with one stone: Desmos — a disguised cheat-code.

Before I was a devout follower, I'd always run out of time on the math section, and had gotten a 690. Mastering Desmos has since bumped that score up by 100 points and facilitated a perfect math score on the PSAT.

All it took was two videos and that aforementioned Dropbox. The former can be found on YouTuber *Adiar Math's* channel. His first video lays out the fundamentals of Desmos, with an emphasis on regression, while the second explores different examples and applications. Having watched dozens of different Desmos guides, I confidently assure you that his 40 minutes of instruction, across both videos, is most encompassing and in-depth. Remember, Desmos can be used to solve everything on the math modules.

But not *everything* needs to be solved with the integrated tool. Proper discernment and acumen comes with experience — experience enabled by

those Dropbox practice questions. Generally, only utilize Desmos to save time or, if needed, solve the problem.

3. Reading & Writing (R&W)

For most, this section proves to be the taller (and more terrible) of the two mountains to climb. The distinguishing factor is that, unlike the math portion, there's no standard curriculum that covers every potential question.

Strategy, nevertheless, exists.

Out of the four subsections demarcated by College Board (as well as the Dropbox), "Expression of Ideas" and "Standard English Conventions" are the most curriculum-based, and thus, able to be learned and perfected. These questions cover transitions (e.g., 'however,' 'moreover,' 'besides'), summaries, and grammar rules. It would be prudent to refresh yourself on the following: subject-verb agreement, tenses, pronouns.

Tangentially, language is a powerful skill. Mastering syntax may seem moot and pointless, but incisive communication is reliant upon these rules; thus, making an effort to perennially check and revitalize your grammar will propel you to higher success on the SAT. One great method, in all honesty, is writing for this newspaper, noting every edit made on an article of yours, perhaps becoming an editor, training your mind and eye for any syntax or grammar error.

As for the questions with passages, pray for the stamina to keep reading and practicing. Each repetition whets your comprehension abilities while simultaneously increasing your speed.

If boredom proves harrowing, I propose a unique solution: take a practice Bluebook exam, then watch a corresponding walkthrough video. For me, I garnered several insights while watching YouTuber *Settele Tutoring* narrate his process of scoring a 1590 on Bluebook #6 (arguably the most difficult of all CollegeBoard's official practice exams).

Lastly, don't stress the three-to-four challenging vocabulary questions. Don't allow answers like 'dilettante,' 'charlatan,' 'protract,' or 'exculpate' to burn through any more than two minutes of your time per question. If unsure, try to locate any roots that may clue you in for a definition. For example, 'exculpate' has 'culp,' resem-

bling the word 'culpable,' and following that train of thought correctly links the word to guilt. All else exhausted, skip it and move on — worst case scenario, you walk out the exam having maximized everything else and score a 1560-1590.

Pro Tip: If a title comes before a name, no commas; if it comes after, use commas — e.g. "English teacher Mr. Cudal" and "Mr. Cudal, an English teacher"

4. Discipline

Dedication is the last cog to transform you into an SAT powerhouse. Construct a working regimen for you and your schedule — be it studying an hour everyday or for an entire Saturday — and stick to it. Knock through most of the medium- and hard-difficulty problems on the Dropbox. As you progress, record and revisit your mistakes. Cross-reference your thinking with the official reasoning.

Once you finish, you'll be equipped with the full purview of possible content that the College Board might hurl at you. Timing now boils down to the swiftness with which you recognize problem types. A couple timed practice exams are adequate benchmarks.

5. Exam Day

Finally, the exam day arrives. Now, sleep is conducive to success... but don't wake up twenty minutes before your test. Allow yourself time to jog your mind by completing a couple passage questions from the Dropbox or reviewing Desmos techniques.

Lastly, and I mean this in all sincerity: pray. You can pray anything, but I especially recommend the prayer to St. Joseph of Cupertino, patron saint of test takers, that you be tested on what you've prepared for.

Godspeed, Saintsmen.

Mental Health: Final Exam Stress



By Cole Dolin ('27)
EDITOR

It's 11:47 PM and you grab your twentieth piece of paper to practice more math before your Algebra II (with Trigonometry!) final exam. Your whole grade, your whole life, even, seems to rely on this test. You can't remember how many times you have plugged in final grades and extra credit into Canvas to see how you can possibly be bumped up to an A. In between sine, cosine, and tangent graphs, you think, "Why am I doing this? Is all this stress really necessary?"

This is a problem many Saintsmen and students all over the world face today. Getting fours and fives on AP exams while keeping your grades up for finals can feel like a giant task. Such stress can impact a student's performance and can even lead to serious health consequences. We often talk about stress as something which can prevent us from achieving our true potential, but is there a certain level of stress which could actually be helpful?

Right before a test, stress causes you

to focus: dust gets blown off of flashcards you haven't touched in a month, and you begin to work effectively. Having some stress within us can actually act as an impulse which keeps us persevering.

There is a fine line between helpful and harmful stress, though — but where exactly is this line?

Too much of it can cause adverse reactions like panic attacks and an overall lack of focus. It can also lead to helplessness, shutting down our bodies which were at first energized by smaller levels of stress.

How can students reduce stress to a healthy level?

One strategy when preparing for finals is preparation — according to Dr. Rafael M. Reyes, PsyD, a clinical psychologist who founded PsychSanDiego, a private psychotherapy practice, most students experience stress because of the lack of control over situations. When students do not know how to respond to a situation, the uncertainty can cause anxiety or panic, however, when preparing adequately and consistently, students regain control and

reduce stress. It is best for students to avoid cramming and instead prepare by attending office hours, seeking help from a tutor, or discussing topics in class to eliminate uncertainties.

Another technique for managing stress during finals is maintaining good physical health, especially getting sufficient sleep. While discussing student wellness, Saints counselor Mr. Golden highlighted the importance of sleep in remaining mentally and psychologically fit during the examination period.

Students often believe that staying up late to study more is productive, but it is actually counterproductive. Sleep helps enhance memory and increase concentration, meaning that proper rest can lower anxiety and improve performance.

Effective time management also plays a key role in reducing stress. Dr. Rey, a Saints counselor with a background in psychology, notes that planning out study time can significantly decrease feelings of being overwhelmed. Creating a schedule that breaks studying into manageable sections helps students stay organized and

avoid last-minute cramming.

When students know what they need to accomplish and they plan it out, they are less likely to feel panicked or rushed. This structured approach not only improves productivity but also provides a sense of stability during an otherwise hectic time.

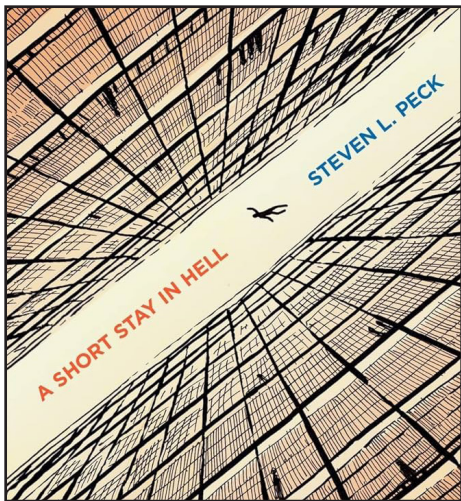
Stress is something every student faces, especially during finals and AP exam season. While it can feel overwhelming, it is not entirely negative. In the right amounts, stress can push students to focus, stay disciplined, and perform at their best. The key is learning how to manage it before it becomes harmful.

Through consistent preparation, proper sleep, and effective time management, students can take back control and keep stress within a healthy range. As that late night of studying turns into exam day, it's important to remember that one test does not define your future. What truly matters is the effort, growth, and resilience built along the way.

Cudal's Freshmen Review Books



By Benjamin Carolin ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



In only one-hundred and eight pages, Peck tells an unforgettable tale of whimsy, loss, and love. The book chronicles the technically finite sojourn in “hell” of Soren Johansson, a devout Mormon. This “hell,” however, is not the Catholic hell we all know, but a Zoroastrian “hell.”

I understand that many of our readers may not be well versed in the intricacies of the Zoroastrian faith so let me provide a brief explanation.

Zoroastrianism is an ancient Persian faith that has few devout followers in the modern age. Many of its core beliefs are shared with Catholicism, such as angels, demons, and immediate judgement after death. Johansson is judged by a demon and sent to a library that is 7.11,297,369 light years in width and depth.

Readers will now understand why “hell” is in quotation marks. This “hell” operates as a sort of space for rehabilitation because it is unfair to assume that everyone on earth knows and recognizes the “true” religion. To ascend to heaven, Johansson has to find the story of his life in this functionally infinite library.

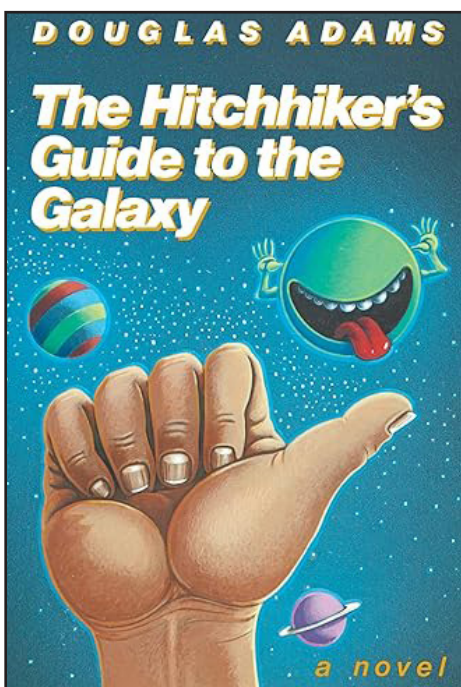
Peck drew heavily from the work of Jorge Luis Borges. He especially drew from Borges’s short story “The Library of Babel,” which is where he got the idea of a functionally infinite library. Despite their similarities, Peck’s is significantly longer and much more intriguing. This book can serve as a gateway to “hardcore” literature and is the perfect starting point for those starting their journey of literary discovery.

To quote *The Doctrine and Covenants* of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints:

“And as all have not faith, seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith.”



By Isaiah Villafaña ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



This acclaimed novel quickly identifies itself as anything but ordinary. Although humorous, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* is ultimately a great read for those starting their vast journey of literature.

Through its absurd adventures, the reader explores the true meaning of life — and the endless uses of a towel. We follow a brilliant cast of characters, whose names are as mindboggling as the universe they traverse, as they chase the ultimate, unanswered questions of life.

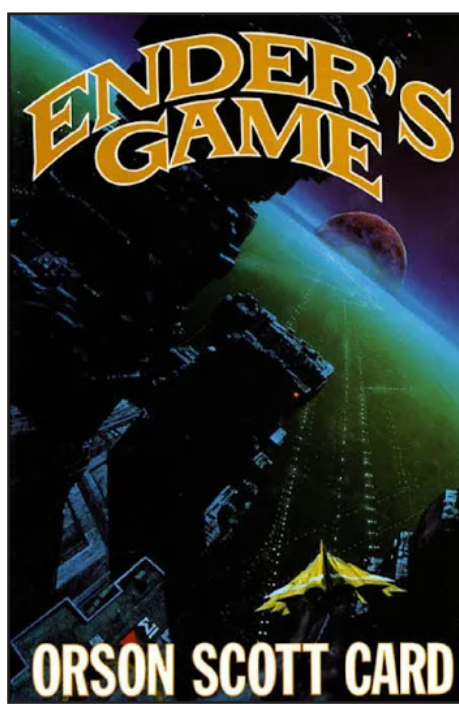
Upon entering this world, logic seems to have been thrown out the window and nothing can be taken at face value. Reading this book, you will find yourself thinking like the greatest philosophers who have ever walked the earth. This masterpiece keeps the pickiest of readers on their toes, trying to predict what unimaginable event will occur next.

The structure prioritizes comedic timing, philosophical parody, and irony over realism and logical decisions. The book constantly provides “facts” that make readers die of laughter. Through all the humor, it raises questions of knowledge, purpose, and truth. Hidden within the nonsense, the truth is revealed to our explorers.

When you have built up the courage to abandon all common sense, pick up this book and dive into a world of comedic gold — and don’t forget your towel.



By Logan Perry ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



This sci-fi novel may seem like an enjoyable book about intergalactic war, but if you read in between the lines, it is really a dive into the inner workings of the human mind. Readers will learn that you cannot truly understand someone or something without having empathy and love for them first.

At a young age, Ender, our protagonist, is taken and trained to be a ruthless, stone-cold killer in command of Earth’s fleet. It is a beautifully written tale of a pre-teen faced with impossible decisions involving the eradication of an entire intelligent species at his own hands.

Ender spends his whole life learning how to fight against an alien race known as the Formics, a cockroach-esque hive-minded lifeform. He is forced to command war games leading other young children against holographic forms of alien fleets. The story reflects deep themes and topics of autonomy, bureaucracy, and morality versus patriotism.

AI COMPARISON continued from page 5

win against Gemini. ChatGPT won on move 28 once again, this time with a back-rank rook checkmate.

Round 3, the consolation game between Claude (white) and Gemini (black) would play out longer than both of the previous games combined. Momentum ebbed back and forth between both players until a simple king-and-pawn endgame remained. Though neither player could find moves necessary to gain an advantage, Claude became disoriented by a hallucinated knight which did not exist. As a result of Claude’s confusion, Gemini was able to promote its pawn into a queen, ultimately securing the win after 88 moves. In all, Claude and Gemini were said to have played at a 1500 and 1550 Elo skill level respectively.

All three chatbots seemed loyal to playing the Sicilian Defense opening, and each at various points struggled to remember the locations of its pieces. ChatGPT scored two points, and Gemini picked up one.

Game 2: Connect Four

In the first two rounds of Connect Four, Claude proved its mastery of the game by defeating Gemini and ChatGPT in six moves and five moves, respectively. It was not even close, and neither Gemini nor ChatGPT were able to form a coherent strategy based in the true state of the game.

Round 3 put the first rounds’ two losers against each other. Both Gemini and ChatGPT struggled with hallucinations; it was challenging for the players to keep track of disk locations from previous turns and to understand the physics of disks dropping into columns. ChatGPT would end up winning on the seventh move, but by accident, not having realized that it had made a horizontal line of four in the second row.

After the three rounds of Connect Four, Claude scored two points, and ChatGPT earned one.

Game 3: Battleship

The first game of Battleship was staged between Claude and ChatGPT, and each competitor decided to spread their ships out into the farthest corners of the board. ChatGPT raced out to an early lead with some effective guesses, but Claude was able to rally back and sink ChatGPT’s last ship with just two pegs remaining on its battleship.

Following its loss, ChatGPT was then challenged by Gemini. Both competitors chose spread formations again, but ChatGPT clearly struggled with guessing in its second game. It refused to guess any coordinates in the ninth or tenth columns, leaving Gemini’s submarine and patrol boat safe for the entirety of the game. Gemini slowly picked off ChatGPT’s ships to seal the win.

For the final game, Gemini went with its tried-and-true spread formation, while Claude opted to exclusively place its ships in horizontal rows. Whether Claude’s formation was too predictable or its opponent just got lucky, Gemini cemented itself as the champion of Battleship. Gemini gets two points for its wins, and Claude one.

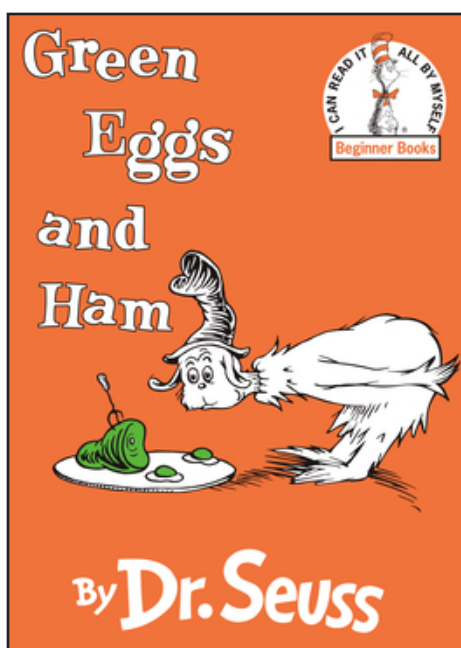
All in all, the AIs were equally ranked, receiving a total of three points each. Thus, choice of AI really comes down to your personal preference. However, one thing that can be said for certain is that none of the AIs tested were immune to confusion and hallucination, so do with that as you will.

The love of literature has been declining among the youth of America for quite some time. The lack of interest has manifested itself in our culture, as we are perpetually bombarded with algorithms, screens, and addictive facades. Even at *The Augustinian* — the pinnacle of prestigious print — editors are losing hope for devoted readers.

But still an ember burns. There is a new freshman class, a new prospect, a new spark to the flame of literary passion. We are that spark. We four freshmen are carrying out our missions as Men of Literature, flooding the world with literary knowledge, embedding novels in the minds of young Saints-men, and proclaiming poetry and prose to all places, starting with these book reviews and recommendations:



By Francis Winn ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



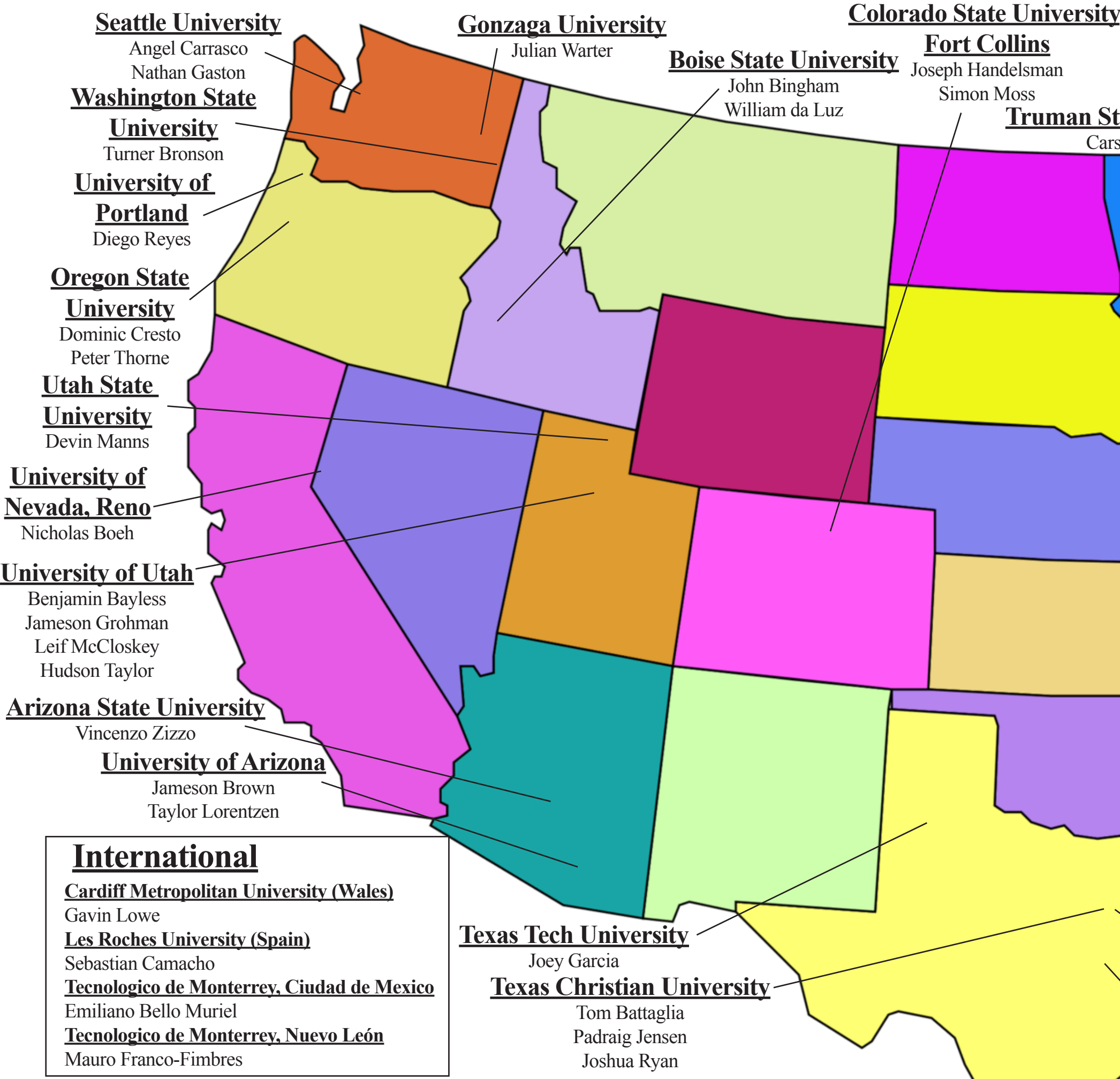
In this thrilling introduction to the world of poetry for young readers, Seuss explores themes, meters, and diction, inspiring the breakfast palates of children worldwide. More impressive yet, he has done so with an eradication of cliché, standard development, and regard for the thoughts of his peers.

Perhaps the greatest example of this boldness is found in the first line. The book opens with a Cartesian existential thought experiment, “I am Sam,” without any plot, setting, or character development preceding it. *Brilliant!*

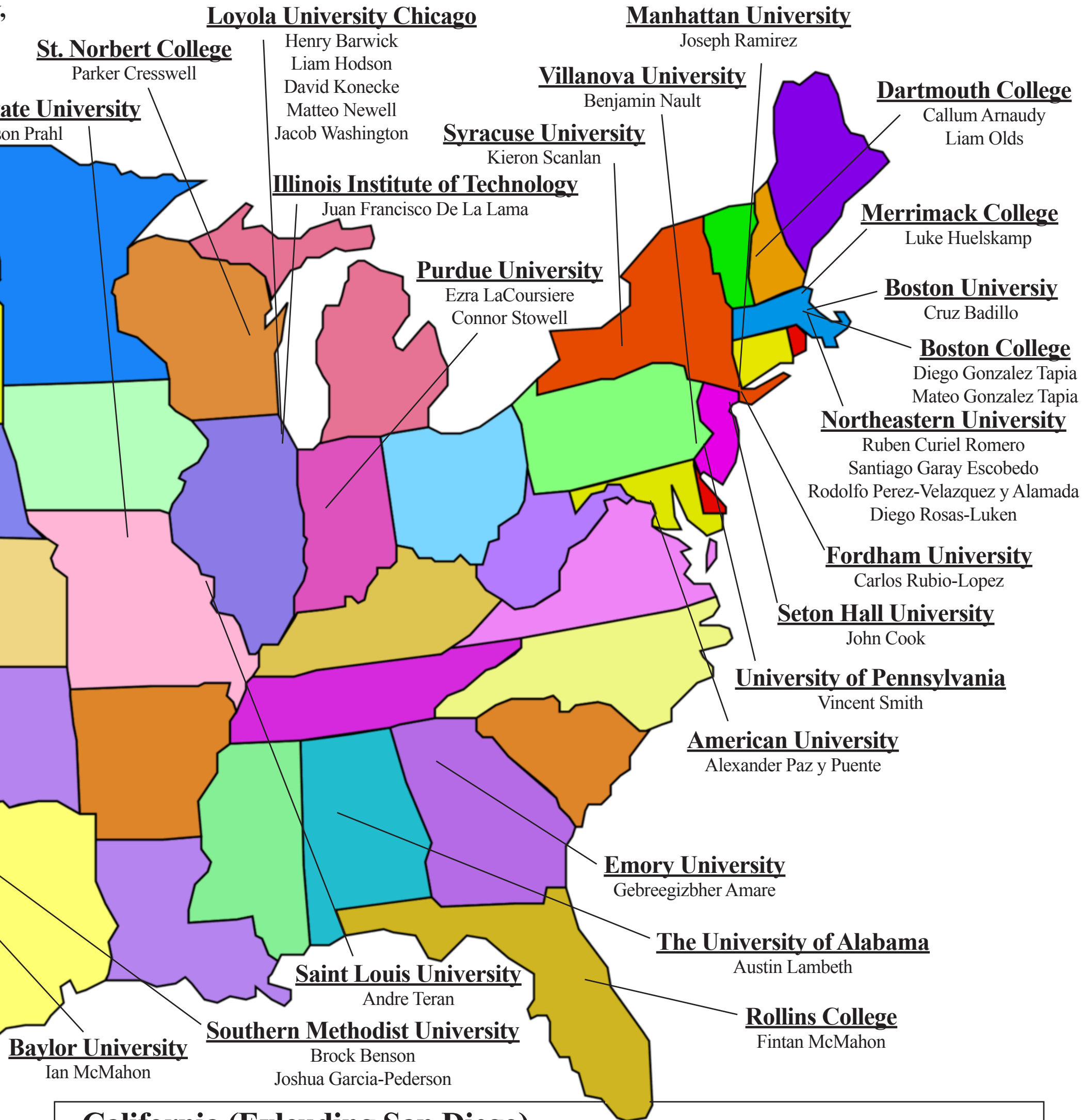
It continues, “Sam I am.” Through this allusion to film by a Yoda-esque declaration, Seuss implies Sam’s sage nature, similar to that of Jedi Masters of old.

Without explanation, Seuss proceeds to the next premise, leaving the reader with questions so unexpected and profound that he or she must dig through the illustrations for any hope of an acceptable answer. The process will take some time, making it a longer read than one originally thought, which leads to another question: shouldn’t the old phrase “don’t judge a book by its cover” also include its “dimensions?”

Unfortunately this book review must come to an abrupt ending. It seems that I have found so many touches of pure beauty in this masterpiece that words will no longer do it justice. To fully understand and witness the genius of Seuss, one must have a complete understanding of our eternal Creator, for with this book, one touches the face of the divine. As Victor Hugo once said, “To read *Green Eggs and Ham* is to see the face of God.”



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California (Exlcuding San Diego)

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CSU Chico
Jake Lapoint
Dalton Rieger

San Jose State University
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Matthew Gosling

UCLA
Jamison Gerding

Westmont College
Lincoln Grogan

US-Israel-Iran Conflict



Reuters

What's happening?



By Oliver Winn ('27)
MANAGING EDITOR

With the US-Iran conflict now in its third month, it is important to understand the ins and outs of the situation. What follows is a summary of the war in Iran so far: why it began, its major developments, and its future outlook.

A few months ago, President Trump began moving aircraft carriers within striking distance of Iran, which the U.S. and Israel already struck just last June, in response to the regime's violent crackdowns on protesters in January. The United States and Iran initiated negotiations and appeared to be making headway, but President Trump reported on February 27, 2026 that he was displeased with the slow progress of negotiations.

Hours later, the U.S. and Israel launched extensive strikes on Iran's leadership, military areas, and missile systems, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on February 28. He has since been succeeded by his son, Mojtaba Khamenei. Other strikes targeted sites linked to Iran's nuclear development program, as well as oil and gas infrastructure, such as the economically vital Kharg Island.

U.S. leadership cited the elimination of potential Iranian nuclear weapons as the major reason for the war. On April 7, human rights activists in Iran reported that over 3,600 people had been killed in Iran, including 1,701 civilians. That toll includes a controversial American strike on a girls' elementary school that killed at least 175 people, mainly children.

Iran responded to the strikes by firing missiles at sites across the Middle East, killing dozens of soldiers and civilians in Israel, Iraq, Kuwait, and elsewhere. So far, 13 American service members have been killed in the war with Iran.

A new front in the conflict was opened on March 2, when the Iran-backed Lebanese Hezbollah group fired missiles and drones at Israel. This attack prompted extensive air strikes by Israel on Lebanon, as well as evacuation orders covering 14% of Lebanon, according to Al Jazeera. Almost 2,300 people in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli attacks, as of April 17. On that day, a ten-day ceasefire went into effect between Hezbollah and Israel, which was soon extended by three weeks, though the border remains highly volatile as of April 30.

On April 3, Iranian forces downed a U.S. F-15 fighter jet over western Iran. Though the pilot was quickly rescued, a search-and-rescue mission was quickly launched to find the second serviceman in the plane, who was successfully extracted by April 7.

One of Iran's most visible retaliatory measures was closing the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow passage out of the Persian Gulf through which one-fifth of the world's oil supply usually passes. Soon after the first strikes by the U.S. and Israel, Iran closed the strait to most foreign shipping, cutting off a significant amount of the global oil supply and sending fuel prices soaring to record highs.

Higher oil prices allowed Iranian oil, which Iran continued to export through the strait, to bring in extremely high revenues for the Iranian government. Despite efforts by the United States to eliminate Iranian missiles within firing distance of ships, Iran has maintained near-total control of the Strait of Hormuz for much of the war.

On April 7, Iran and the United States agreed to a two-week ceasefire, which also applied to Israel. On April 13, after talks between Vice President JD Vance and the Speaker of the Parliament of Iran, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, failed to make headway, President Trump ordered a naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz to prevent any ships from passing in or out of Iranian ports. Thus, the U.S. hoped to economically cripple Iran by cutting off its revenue from oil exports.

As of April 30, the ceasefire continues to be in effect, and both Iran and the United States claim to be in control of the Strait of Hormuz, yet The New York Times reports that it is impossible to know who is really in control. The Center for Strategic and International Studies reports that the U.S. has suffered economically from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, as well as losing political traction at home and abroad from criticism of the conflict.

It is unclear where the war in Iran is likely to head in the future. Tehran's persistence raises questions over the feasibility of any total victory for the United States, while Americans are losing patience for another war in the Middle East that lacks a clear end in sight. In any case, the war in Iran has been very controversial for the United States, leaving many unanswered questions as to what comes next.

What's the Church's stance?



By Enzo Simon ('27)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

“The purpose of all wars, is peace.”
- St. Augustine

This peace-oriented lens of war forms the foundation of the just war theory, a Catholic doctrine delineating the moral guidelines and limitations for war. Its existence may seem paradoxical, but it's imperative to note that it is an ultima ratio (“last resort”), and only to be used after all peaceful measures have been exhausted.

The recent war in Iran is *not* one of these moral exceptions.

Instigated by the United States and Israel, the war has sparked massive, fiery debate for its contentious objectives, the means used to carry them out, and the deleterious global and ethical repercussions. In particular, President Trump and Pope Leo XIV represent the authorities for supporters and condemners, respectively.

As is often the case when politics and religion conflict, the resulting division has brewed tension and confusion for many worldwide. Countless church officials have denounced the war, with Pope Leo recently appealing to “those responsible for [the] conflict” for a ceasefire. In failing to meet the four requisite conditions for a just war, Pope Leo denounces it as unjustified and unholy. Stipulated by the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) — the official, comprehensive summary of recognized faith teachings within the Catholic Church — the four requisite conditions for a just war are: (1) just cause, (2) last resort, (3) probability of success, and (4) proportionality (CCC 2309).

For ‘just cause,’ a conflict must be in response to lasting, grave, and certain damage — essentially “self-defense” against a real, imminent threat. This is not the case with the war in Iran. As Archbishop of Washington Cardinal McElroy put it, the conflict with Iran is not in response to an “existing or imminent and objectively verifiable attack,” but rather to speculative future threats. Catholic teaching has consistently rejected preventative war: without a clear threat of aggression, waging war becomes a display of belligerence rather than an act of defense, collapsing any moral basis.

That lack of clear and immediate

threat, as McElroy highlights, undermines any claim that all diplomatic or nonviolent options have been exhausted, failing to, at all, be considered a “last resort.”

For the ends to justify such grisly means, war must have a realistic chance of improving the overall situation. Here, McElroy points to the deep instability of the Middle East, warning that military intervention could trigger wider conflict, economic disruption, and political collapse. In such an unpredictable environment, it is far from clear that war would achieve its intended goals, calling this criterion into question.

And finally — the principle of proportionality.

The principle that weighs the pros against the cons. It is likely that the harm caused by the war will outweigh any good it seeks to achieve. McElroy emphasizes the potentially catastrophic consequences of war with Iran: regional escalation, massive civilian casualties, and global economic strain, with millions already having been affected.

Devastatingly, more than 100 children were killed in the U.S.'s strike on the Shajareh Tayyebah Elementary School. With the destruction so extensive, Catholic teaching holds that *this* reason for and use of force becomes morally impermissible.

For over 1,000 years, the Catholic Church has looked to the just war theory to help navigate the murky waters of war, offering a clear framework for Catholic morality to shine a light amid the darkness of global conflicts.

Nevertheless, even when justified, war is always ugly and brutal.

St. John Paul II disparaged that war “is always a defeat for humanity” and Pope Francis declared that “every war leaves the world worse than it was before.”

Concerning war, especially in regards to the desolation and misery it engenders, truth is and will always be found, not from politics, but in mortality.

The faithful can find consolation in Pope Leo's Palm Sunday Homily.

“This is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war... He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: ‘Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood.’”

To the moon and back

Artemis II mission a success



By Kieron Scanlan ('26)
STAFF WRITER

Following the successful completion of their Artemis II mission, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) looks ahead to future plans. With all eyes looking their way, the Space Launch System (SLS) launched on April 1, 2026, and completed a 10-day trip.

The trip began with a successful launch from Kennedy Space Center in Florida, then continued with an orbit around Earth to slingshot the *Orion* capsule on a trajectory to the Moon. In doing so, the four astronauts aboard *Orion* were 252,756 miles away from Earth, breaking NASA's previous record of 248,655 miles achieved by Apollo 13 in 1972. By the time the astronauts splashed down 60 miles off the coast of San Diego on April 10, they had travelled just over 700,000 miles.

This mission was very reminiscent of Apollo 8 in 1968, a preparatory mission that tested the Apollo 8 spacecraft's ability to successfully reach lunar orbit. Prior to the mission, Artemis II astronaut Christina Koch stated, "I hope they forget all about Artemis II." Being forgotten would mean that future missions are successful, and that colonies on the Moon and Mars are

closer to reality than they are now.

Following splashdown, it appeared that the mission had gone flawlessly. To ensure continued success on future missions, NASA examined the data collected by the systems on the SLS and *Orion*. Researchers found that the SLS achieved its goal of orbital insertion by reaching a velocity of 18,000 miles per hour, completing its mission with exact precision.

The *Orion* capsule proved resilient during Earth reentry, reaching speeds 35 times the speed of sound. Furthermore, the heatshield's durability was a minor concern during the mission, but following further inspection, it had only received minor char loss during reentry into Earth's atmosphere.

But what comes next in the Artemis program? So far, there are five Artemis missions scheduled. Artemis III is the next planned mission, scheduled for 2027. This mission will have astronauts orbit Earth to test docking procedures with the *Orion* capsule and the lunar lander. This will be a crewed mission, but the astronauts who will fly on Artemis III have not been publicly named.

Artemis IV, expected to launch in early 2028, will land two astronauts on the Moon to establish a settlement, likely at its southern pole. The mission is scheduled for early 2028 and



Lift off!

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will utilize either SpaceX's Starship or Blue Origin's Blue Moon human landing systems. This trip will start the process of building a base on the Moon, with the two astronauts staying on the moon for a week while their crew orbits the Moon.

NASA plans to land at the south pole because of the region's deep, shaded craters — known as Permanently Shadowed Regions (PSRs) — that contain ice, which is essential for the development of a lunar base because it can be

used to make rocket fuel, oxygen, and drinking water. These are all very important factors in the long-term success of the lunar base. The lunar base will be resupplied by Artemis V, which is scheduled for late 2028.

Building a base on the Moon will open up a multitude of new opportunities as we look to put humans on Mars. The future of the Artemis program is very bright, with exciting plans to push deeper into our solar system, venturing where no human has traveled before.

Trump vs. Pope Leo: a debate



By Paddy Ward ('26)
STAFF WRITER

Moderator: As tensions flare across the globe, no place is quite as scalding as Iran. The US-Israel-Iran war has been raging for several weeks now and has led to the death of thousands and disrupted the global oil supply. Pope Leo XIV, leader of the Catholic Church, has been calling for peace, but has butted heads with the president of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

Tonight we bring them together, face to face, to debate about this hot-button issue.

Trump: Hello, it is quite wonderful to be here. I quite frankly have never heard of a pope before! They're calling them popes! Wow, Pope Leo! He's been saying some quite nasty things about my Super Duper Short Military Excursion, and he hurt the feelings of my Secretary of War, Pete Hegseth.

Pope: Hello, I am quite glad to have this opportunity to solve some key issues and try my best to try to bring peace to this conflict.

Moderator: Pope Leo XIV, you have recently said that no one can use God to justify war and that the prayers of those who wage war are ignored by God. Mr. President, what are your thoughts about this statement?

Trump: This is quite frankly the most insane thing to have ever been said in the history of mouths and I have never heard anything so bad — so bad, people.

Pope: It is really quite simple. Jesus is the King of Peace. He was committed to non-violence and loving everyone, even your adversary. He did not arm himself and he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey — not a war horse. War leads to immense loss and destruction of the enemy but also, more importantly, of innocent bystanders. You simply cannot justify any war in His name.

Moderator: Wow, and He really said that? From the Christian standpoint it seems pretty logical to decide

your stance. Where else could this possibly g-

Trump: WOW! I'm sorry but that sounds a little — woke! Woke, that's what they're calling it! Peace! Peace... the Loony Left, they want to give a little PEACE of yellow cake uranium to the Ayatollahalalah Kamalahameini and a little PEACE of yellow cake to all of the other terrorists and a lil PEA-

Pope: Stop it! War is always-
Trump: WAR?!?! This is not a war! It isn't even a short military excursion. It is a new thing that I just created, and has never been done before, especially to a Muslim nation. It is really quite simple and ingenious, you see, we send a bunch of *cruise* missiles into Iran, blowing up all of our targets and we call it *aid*. A *Cruise-aid*!

Moderator: Hmm, it sounds like something I've heard before...I can't quite put my finger on it...are you perhaps referencing...the great Durr Burger v. Tomato Head War of 2018?

Pope: No, he's *NOT*. Just...wow. How have we strayed so far from God's loving embrace? The non-violence Jesus preached — loving thy neighbor, turning the other cheek — has been lost. War has brought so much pain, death, and destruction to the world. How can we expect to live in right relationship with God and our fellow man if we murder them?

Trump: That was really...really...dumb, I have quite frankly never heard anything so dumb. I've even had to listen to Sleepy Joe. To show how dumb that was here is a really epic image that I personally took of myself, me, in Tehran. Folks, you've never seen something so great!

Moderator: That concludes our debate. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for tuning in to this highly productive discussion.

AP Newsroom

Liam's Farewell



By Liam Olds ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

Dearest Readers,

It has finally come time for me to say farewell. After two years at the helm of this glorious publication, my typing hands have grown riddled with senioritis and the wily young Enzo Simon seeks to kick an old man to the curb.

Before he does, I have a few last words.

It has been an absolute pleasure to tell your stories in ink, documenting all of the important moments of our high school careers. None of this would be possible without you, and so I would like to thank you all for your generous interviews, photo contributions, and lukewarm interest in the paper all these years.

As the presses churn out the final issue of my tenure, I'd like to leave you all with some parting wisdom. Eyes closed, face first, can't lose.

Grammar matters

As a dewy-eyed youth, I had one grand aspiration that consumed me, surpassing all other childhood dreams: me talk pretty one day. I'm pleased to announce, I am well on my way to governing the gift of gab goodly and my life is all the better for it. Grades are up, college essays are well-structured and the ladies are surely swooning.

I know Mr. Cudal's class can be difficult, but his lecture on heavenly bodies comes in handy when writing love letters to that special someone: "I love you to the moon!" Trust me gents, she'll know exactly whom can satiate her grammar needs and whom cannot.

Don't threaten people's technology

In my younger and more vulnerable years, feeling all slick after attending an editorial leadership intensive, I thought it wise to publish a *two-page spread* in the newspaper on why we need a cell phone ban in schools. No one spoke to me for

a week — not even my parents — and I saw a horde of freshmen start foaming at the mouth even thinking about Supercell withdrawal.

My advice?

If you ever find yourself between an ethical obligation and a screen-deprived Gen Alpha, run. It's better to abandon your morals than to get bitten.

The future is bright

As print media dies and we all wait in agony for its final death rattle, it's important to remember the bright future we have ahead. In sacrificing the foundation of our democracy, we gain something far, far better: photoshopped Clash Royale teacher lookalikes!

The single most complimented piece of content throughout my entire time with the paper, these images looked fine in print, but boy do they look even better online! It gives me comfort to know that even while our country is divided on the existence of science, the security of our elections, and whether or not we have the right to criticize our leaders, we can all agree that Mr. Hickey looks like an absolute icon as Golem.

Listen more

Boo. I know it's not hip these days to be serious in the news but I had to slip in one real piece of advice. I got into journalism because I wanted an excuse to talk to all kinds of people and to learn their stories. The experience facilitated lifelong friendships, and has given me an appreciation for the diversity in perspective many seem to fear. It's a lot easier to be a loving person when you're willing to listen.

Read *The Augustinian*

The greatest gift ever bestowed upon mankind was the gift to tell and to appreciate stories — more specifically, stories in *The Augustinian*. I believe it was written some 2,000 years ago, "Whoever reads *The Augustinian* and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not read will be condemned." Who am I to blow against the wind?

With immense gratitude,
Liam Atticus Olds
Editor-in-Chief Emeritus,
The Augustinian

Student Feature: Liam McDowell *Firefighter in training*



Senior Liam McDowell (center) fired up with the crew.

Courtesy of Liam McDowell '26



By Liam Olds ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

While most Saintsman are asleep at 8:30 on a Saturday morning, senior Liam McDowell can be found training to save lives. Already an experienced fire cadet, Liam is on track to become a firefighter in the San Diego Fire Department within the next two years.

Liam always knew he wanted to help people. When it came time to search for an internship for his senior intersession, Mr. Wallace helped guide him to EMS provider Falck.

"I don't like a desk job, I don't want to sit behind a desk. I want to go out and be outside, be in the field, and help people," Liam said. "Mr. Wallace really helped me dial down what to do."

Though he originally wanted to end up working for California Highway Patrol, during his internship, Liam made connections with firefighters who helped

him get accepted into the city fire cadet program.

"I met some really talented firefighters with San Diego Fire and, from there, I just became attached," Liam said.

As a cadet, Liam attends drills two to three times a week where he trains alongside active firefighters. He learns how to use all of the equipment necessary to respond to a wide variety of scenarios. He then applies those drills, assisting with real calls and responding to medical emergencies, car accidents, house fires, and more.

"You do everything a firefighter does... you're just at the bottom of the totem pole," Liam said.

Liam's path as he works his way up the ranks has not been that of the typical sheltered trainee — instead, he has helped save a life. Responding to a call about a suicidal man, Liam joined the crew as they talked a man off the ledge.

"We basically just went around him and started talking to him. That's what

he really needed was a person to talk to," Liam said. "He went to the hospital, got the help he needed, so he's on the road to recovery."

Liam does not yet have a station he is permanently assigned to — that will come in June — but he spends most of his time at Station 36 in Claremont. Station 36 is special for Liam, not only because it is close to his home, but also because it was the station to respond when his dad fell ill.

"I really just appreciate those guys... and girls [at Station 36]... taking the time to come and help," Liam said. "They helped my dad and I wanted to repay."

Liam extended the call to service to his fellow Saintsman, proposing emergency response roles as a fulfilling purpose in life.

"If you want to help people, and you want to feel good about helping people, and [feel] that you really made a difference, I'd consider becoming a firefighter or going into the emergency realm," Liam said.

MINISTRY MANIFESTOS

continued from page 5

low and far away to make it as difficult as possible to place the Eucharist, or they want it by tongue, but then barely open their mouth.

After we are done, we put the ciborium back on the altar, bow once again, and go back to the sacristy to purify our hands, and to "intricately" roll the cross back and put it in the basket.

We also distribute the Blood of Christ, waiting for someone, *anyone* to walk up to us after receiving Christ's Body. Many students are unsure if they can receive it, so they forgo it entirely. Despite the rarity of someone receiving it, we still must be cautious that the Blood does not spill onto the ground, lest we watch in embarrassment while one of the brothers cleans up our mess.

Benjamin: The Liturgy of the Eucharist is our time to shine. From the offertory song to the "Lamb of God" to our two songs during Communion, the whole gym relaxes under the soothing influence of our melodies — and hopefully doesn't notice our abiding fears of singing out of turn or out of beat with Pablo's piano.

Concluding Rites

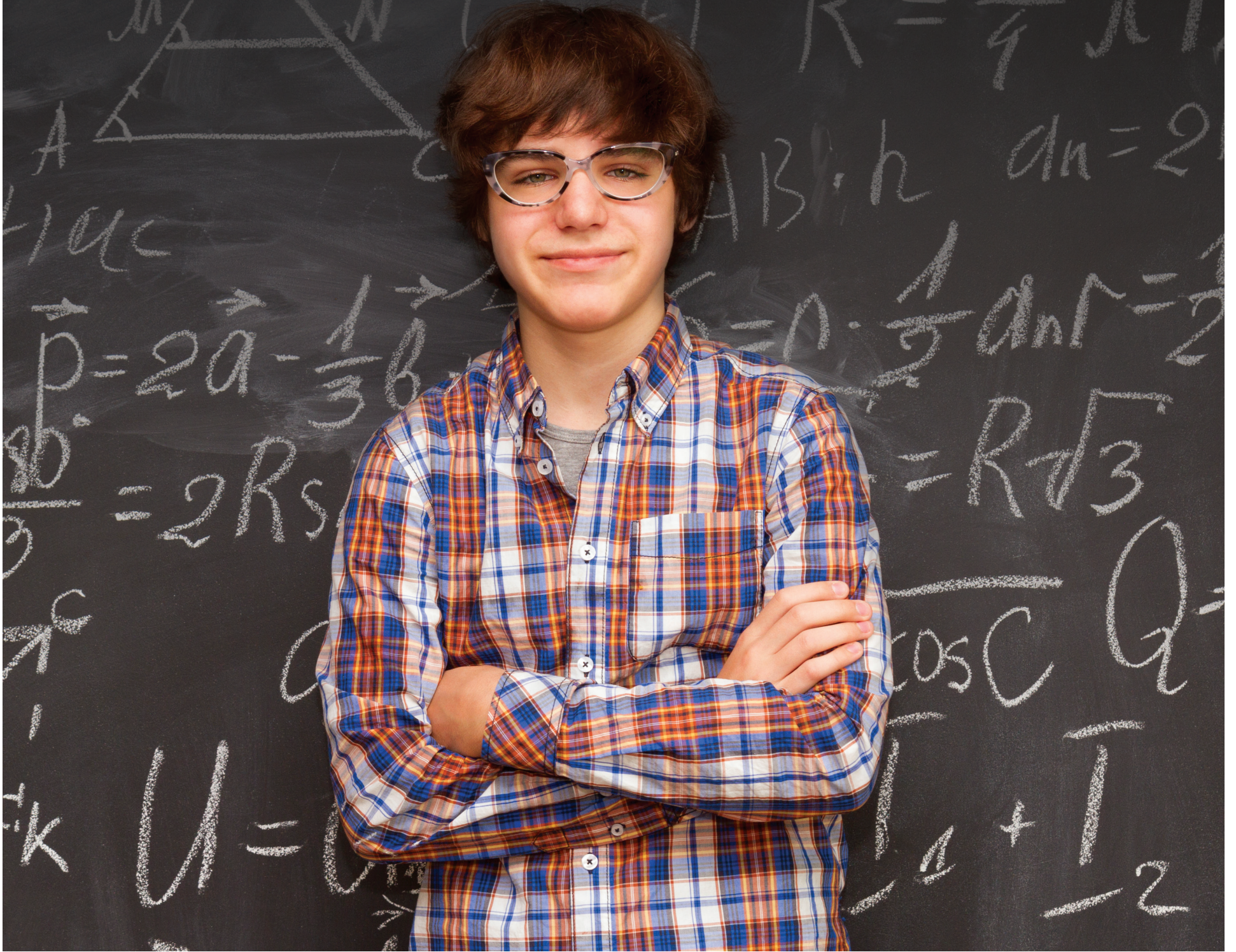
Bryson: After we get the Eucharist, it's all over. With great speed and precision we take our places with candles and cross raised aloft as the voices of the school crescendo in chorus while we gracefully exit. Really, as much as I've been joking, finishing Mass does feel quite fulfilling.

After Mass, while JOB is dismissing each house, we clean up, taking the bells, altar cloth, stands, and books back to be carefully sorted (shoutout BroTo and Brother Arturo, they do all the work). Then, we throw whatever else is left into the Sacristy, and with that, our impossible task is complete.

Benjamin: If it weren't for our leadership in the "Glor-y" after Mass, the student body would erupt in a haphazard cacophony of shrieks and whistles while the priest gaped in horror.

Editor's Note: Two of our three regular servers are leaving next year and we need more people! If you have any experience, PLEASE sign up for altar serving. Please. Please. Please!

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Formula Faculty: Fastest Staff on Earth



By Joseph Walker ('27)
STAFF WRITER

Recently, the FIA called upon Pope Leo with a simple request: "We are in dire need of a new team to replace the tragedy of Aston Martin." Hearing this, the Pope understood what he needed to do. He picked up the phone and began to dial the finest group he knew to accomplish the task: St. Augustine High School...

in **New Orleans, Louisiana.**

But they didn't pick up, so he immediately called his second number one: us. With the new task at hand, he was given the fabled list of faculty and staff, and made the following decisions:

Driver (Mr. Adams)

Mr. Adams is no stranger when it comes to quick reaction speeds, making him the perfect candidate for the new first driver. Mr. Adams is renowned for being the Grand Chancellor of physics, granting him a tactical advantage when deriving the most optimal lines to take on the

track. When it comes to his speed, Mr. Adams is no slouch, as he quickly calculates the acceleration of his competitors and strategically assigns them "Barrier Time," an upgrade package that came with signing to *Saints Speedsters*.

The noise emanating from his car won't be a v10 engine but instead the Chunky Hustle Brass Band's melodious sound whining out car imitation noises depending on acceleration and braking patterns. Watch his live feed, and you **SHALL** hear the fabled quote: "Can't-CAN'T STOP ME!"

Race Engineer (Mr. Cudal)

Who else to choose for the driver's conscience and guide than the Man of Literature himself? Mr. Cudal's keen ability to remember stories with clarity like the back of his hand also grants him a great strength in regards to remembering and deciphering the strategy of others, sharing the current race info with Mr. Adams.

As the announcer at many home games at Saints, Mr. Cudal also has much experience on live updates and entertain-

ing the crowd and driver. Mr. Cudal can be heard providing vaguely similar quotes such as: "Don't check your blindspots," "Stop checking the speedometer, just go fast," and, most famously, "Vroooo(hhh)m!"

Head of Strategy (Mr. Chesser)

The name of the role itself lends itself to Mr. Chesser. Named after the most strategic game known to man, Mr. "Chess Piece" Chesser is well known for his properly planned out schedules for each school year, rumored to have been perfectly calculated ever since the dawn of the The First Day of School, circa 2018. These prophetic abilities to provide such schedules make him the perfect choice to coordinate the strategies for the *Saints Speedsters*.

Furthermore, Mr. Chesser's knack for giving essays that perfectly fit the allotted time frame of class makes him strong in regards to pit entry timings and calculating the picosecond (when to pit). I mean, with all this information being provided, "are you with me or no?"

Made with love by Benjamin Nault '26

Team Principal (Mr. Hickey)

Rumor has it that after seeing Ferrari's "questionable" racing last year, Mr. Hickey decided to show the ease with which an F1 team can be run. Mr. Hickey is not inexperienced with leading a new team into the fierce flames of The First Year™. Mr. Hickey has led both aerial and terrestrial teams to success, so what better way to demonstrate his leadership skills than by leading a motorsport to victory?

He warmed up by moderating the robotics team this year, where they outshone competition as a rookie team. Surely, this won't be much more difficult than herding robotics kids to do an objective and not get off track, right? He can already be seen in his classroom planning every potential upgrade and financial decision for the team.

Finally, rumor has it that there will be a new course here in San Diego: The Fiesta Island GP, with designated seating for The Pit. Surely, with the *Saints Speedsters*, we will now be able to demonstrate that **WE** are the owners of San Diego!

In-house expert ranks brainrot

Does he larp?



By Gannon Hayes ('27)
EDITOR

Over time, new words get added to the English lexicon. In 1984, we had "New-speak." In *Star Trek*, we had "Klingon." In the big '26, we have "brainrot": the language of power, the language of the future, the language of people who will one day rule the world. Here, therefore, are the top six brainrot terms or words which should be revered with the utmost respect which they deserve. Hark.

1. Triple T

Tung Tung Tung Sahur: a name that makes the ground shake every time it is uttered. Triple T has aura from the moment the school bell tolls. Its prevalence starts in the daily occurrence of attendance, where it is practically guaranteed that at least one jester will declare themselves the "Tung Tung Tung Sa-*here*."

Nay, the carnage does not stop there, as within even the most serious of classes, such as AP Calculus, Triple T and its derivatives will be found on the screen of at least one student playing "Steal the Brainrot." Triple T and his motley crew of other personified AI images have been around for over a year, and at this point in time, it looks as if they are unstoppable.

2. 6-7

Do not get it twisted. While 6-7 may be on a prolonged downfall, its legacy and domination in the first semester of school makes it a shoo-in for second place. 6-7 has the distinction of being the first brainrot to infect the faculty population at Saints, whether it be Mr. Bachynsky's lesson on "6-7 morality" or flipping to page 67 of your textbook. And despite it being the Lord's year of two thousand and twenty-six, this brainrot's legacy remains ingrained in the back of hearts and desks alike.

3. Low Cortisol

While low cortisol is only a rookie in the NBA (National Brainrot Association), it has made a large enough impact to propel itself to number three on this list. As an up-and-coming prospect, low cortisol is very versatile. In every corner of the Saints campus, students are trying to achieve a nirvana-esque, tranquil state of mind by lowering their cortisol. As finals and AP exams creep around the corner, students are reporting higher cortisol levels than ever before.

4. Arby's and Rod Wave

Arby's and Rod Wave — this duo of demise and deep fried disguise despises those with taste buds and earbuds alike. While the two seem to be a match made in hell, this troublesome twosome has crept its way into the phones of many Saints-men, polluting their minds with images of half pound roast beefs and cheddar, and their ears with music worse than awful.

5. Clavicular Framemog

One cannot acknowledge such tragedy without the utmost honor and sorrow. News of the "framemog" spread like wildfire about the campus and brought with it something more terrifying than the ASU Frat Leader. Within days students' vocab quickly evolved into [**in-*sert***]maxing and [**in-*sert***]mogging, much to English teachers' dismay.

6. Larping

It was Descartes that said "I larp, therefore I am." Larping is just a popular term that describes something more visceral at Saints and the entire world: the desire to be something you are not. Larping is an epidemic at Saints. Whether it be Cudal students larping that they read the assigned book, or students in physics larping that they are the reincarnation of Sir Isaac Newton himself, larping — while the word may cease — will never die.

New Teacher: Dr. Thomas P. Cudal



2nd Lt. Dr. Thomas P. Cudal displaying his three Purple Hearts.



By Christian Callaghan ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR



By Vito Bottini ('29)
CONTRIBUTOR

Dr. Thomas Paul Cudal, the newest addition to the Saints faculty, will start as an English teacher in the 2026-27 school year. He will be teaching Honors English I, English III, and the new Russian Language and Culture class, inspired by his doctoral studies in Moscow.

Having quite the educational background, Dr. Cudal boasts a Bachelor of Arts from San Diego State University, a Master of Education from Azusa Pacific University, and a Doctorate in English Literature from Moscow State University.

The illustrious Dr. Cudal has experience as a bartender, professional sports announcer, motivational speaker, and farmer of Bavarian hops. After earning his doctorate, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served in the 362nd Attack Helicopter Squadron, reaching the rank of Second Lieutenant.

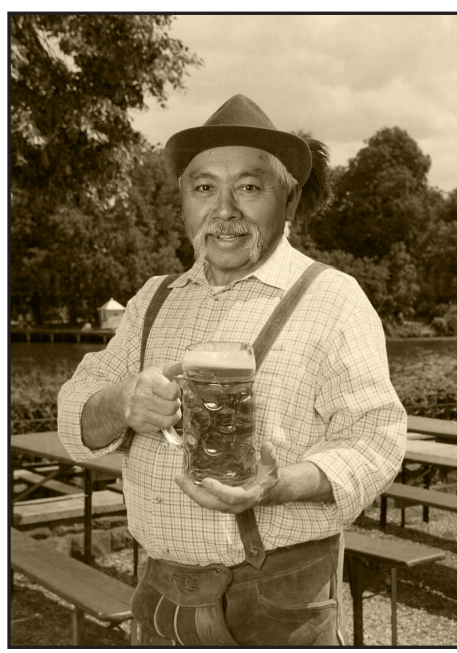
Despite being wounded in a crash, 2nd Lt. Cudal heroically led his platoon back to friendly lines while under heavy

Courtesy of Christian Callaghan '29
enemy fire. For his injuries, he received three *Purple Hearts* and an honourable discharge. He later discovered his passion for teaching after a failed contract with the San Diego Padres as an MLB announcer.

Born Thomas Gerhardt Philipp Kudel in post-World War II Munich, West Germany, Dr. Cudal immigrated to San Diego in 1968 and changed his name to Thomas P. Cudal, just in time to start his ninth-grade education at St. Augustine High School. The late Fr. Patrick J. Keane, the principal at the time, remembered Cudal's antics in a 2009 interview with an Augustinian journalist, recounting his "great escapes" from class to visit the beach.

Athletically, Cudal was a beast, running track, wrestling, and playing football, all while wearing the iconic number 62. He was known as the B.M.O.C. (Big Man on Campus) and was loved by his peers and teachers alike. He graduated from Saints in 1972 with *summa magna ultra deluxe cum laude* honors.

Dr. Cudal is fluent in Russian, German, English, and Spanish, and has budding proficiency in French (Madame was unfortunately not at Saints to instruct Dr. Cudal). After he received the Augustinian Achievement Award in 2026, St. Augustine High School's search committee



The Master of Literature in his Munich homeland.

Courtesy of Benjamin Nault '26
unanimously decided to hire Dr. Thomas P. Cudal and add him to the ever-growing arsenal of excellent Saints teachers. Cudal gladly accepted the job offer, hoping to make his future Saints career his fourth "Purple Heart."

Saints students can expect the new addition of Dr. Cudal to boost morale on campus. In a recent interview, Dr. Cudal warned his future students to, "Sit up straight, keep your hand from your face, do not look at the clock or yawn, and never say, 'Yeah.'"

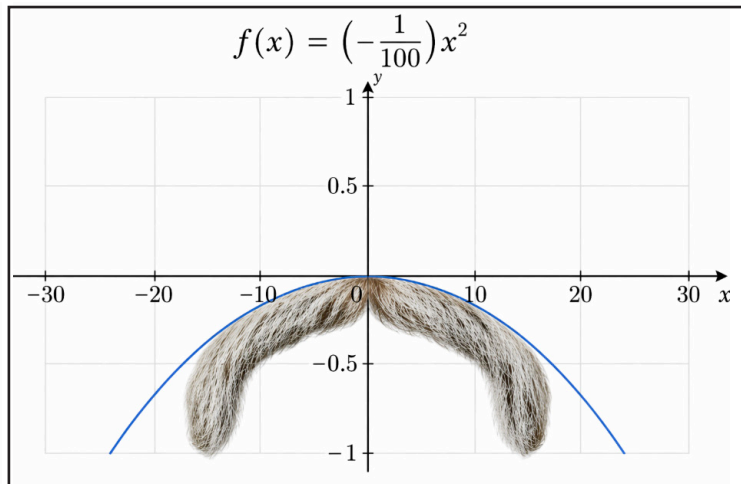
He also warned the administration that he will go on ridiculous tangents reminiscing the past, often (respectfully) insult his students' game (or lack thereof), and give quizzes looking for completely arbitrary, esoteric details in literature. Additionally, he has stated his inten-

tion to disregard conventional terminology, maintaining that a vertical group, exclusively in the context of a class dismissal, should be referred to as a "row." He is currently petitioning the Merriam-Webster dictionary to update their outdated definition of desk groupings.

"I think Dr. Cudal will be a fine addition to St. Augustine High School's storied history of excellent teachers, in particular, in the areas of English, Russian, and facial grooming," said Mr. Hecht, the Assistant Principal of Academics.

When interviewing Mr. Isaak, however, a new opinion surfaced. Mr. Isaak, the self-proclaimed leader of the Tom Club, declared that Dr. Cudal was "the inferior Tom, most likely a spy from Saints North." Upon further questioning, Isaak revealed that Cudal's mustache was best reflected by the quadratic function $f(x) = (-1/100)x^2$, which is, as he described, "definitely a frown graph." Nevertheless, he still refuses to admit the mustache is real, insisting that it is "a dollar store adhesive at best."

Mr. Hickey also claimed Dr. Cudal as his "freshman" in accordance with the time-honored tradition of Saints Brotherhood. So when you see 2nd Lt. Dr. Thomas "Tommy" P. Cudal, either around campus or in one of his classes, remember him for what he was, is, and will become: a legend.



The algebraic frown in question.

Courtesy of Christian Callaghan '29

Advanced Placement Horror Stories



By Benjamin Nault ('26)
EDITOR EMERITUS

AP classes are already bad enough, but combine that with having the almighty College Board tell you what to study day in and day out it is *exhausting*. You walk into the big gym (classrooms this year, thank God) and sit down on your throne of misery. Once the clock hits zero, both "crap I got a two on that tops" and "THANK THE GOOD LORD IT'S OVER" go through your head. But NO. EVERYTHING WENT WRONG. Here are a couple of horror stories from the past years on AP testing days.

Sir Liam Olds should've gotten a five on AP French. I should've gotten a five on AP Spanish. Why didn't I? Because I wasn't good enough. Why didn't he? Because he couldn't hear the darn audio. If you didn't know, the foreign language AP tests have a verbal portion — unless you are taking AP Dead Language (Latin) — and you need to hear the audio in order to write your response or verbally record your response to the conversation/presentation prompts. Too bad the gym speakers sound like an airport terminal person. Or an adult in Charlie Brown. Darn impossible to hear that thing.

Second on the list, what happens

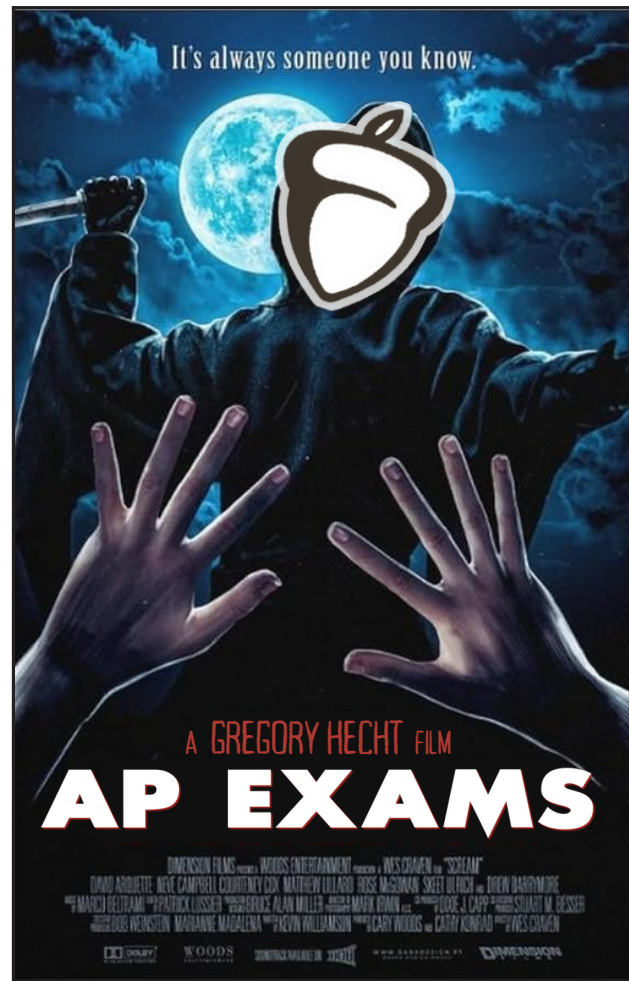
when you get peckish but also like to burn your marshmallows to a crisp when making smores. Popcorn isn't a favorite of fire alarms, especially when it is overdone and looks more like the volcano rock-ridden beaches of Hawaii than the succulent, golden white buttery bits of goodness they are supposed to be. A couple of years ago our poor AP English Language test-takers were almost faced with a "Go Directly to Jail, Do Not Pass Go, Do Not Collect \$200" card when their test got interrupted by the fire alarms being divas and crying when they smelled the faintest whiff of a kernel being burnt.

Third, if you don't hear Mr. Hecht ridiculing the test-taking class while you're waiting (or getting yelled at directly), you're doing something wrong. Many students were talking after the APUSH test last year, and we were thus called the "worst class of test takers [Mr. Hecht] had ever seen." A couple of days later, I had a second AP test (of four total 'cause I'm an academic weapon) and the seniors taking their test were apparently not the quietest. Mr. Hecht then declared that they were the "worst class of test takers [he] had ever seen." Apparently every class is simply the worst.

Fourth, if you happen to be in the middle of the illustrious AP Music

Theory exam singing your heart out, (yes, singing is an actual required part of the exam) be prepared for lights, the power, and your confidence in your AP score to cut out at any moment. That is an actual thing that happened to an unfortunate junior last year, further demonstrating just how cursed and devilish and ridiculous the AP Music Theory exam is.

With all of this said, AP tests are ongoing and about to finish up. You got this, Saintsmen. Don't cook any popcorn. Listen closely to the airport announcer, in case they are doing their last call for boarding — you don't want to get stuck on a connecting flight from St. Louis to Philadelphia when you were originally taking off from Chicago (story for another time). And finally, DO NOT talk after your AP tests are done. We don't want Mr. Hecht thinking that you are at the epicenter of de-



Made with love by George Burrell '26
generacy, would we now? No, that's what Marine Street Beach is for.

Soviet prison camp (Gulag): hour-by-hour



The 2025-2026 editing staff.

Gannon Hayes '27



By the editors

Gulags were Soviet prison camps where prisoners did hard labor. Gulag is also what we editors affectionately call our week-long editing sessions. Typically lasting over six hours per day, it is at these sessions that we put our blood, sweat, and tears into our school's beloved newspaper in order to get it out on time.

When the two o'clock bell tolls at the end of the day, most students grab their backpacks, run to the door, and sprint to their cars in jubilation. One week each month, however, the same toll tells a different tale for us editors. School may end for everyone else, but for us, it's only just begun.

It's *Gulag* time.

2 p.m.: Editors arrive

The hardest part of the day. Inspiration is insanely hard to come by, and it probably is less common to come across than seeing any of us talking to a girl. That being said, this article is written, isn't it? Ben usually changes into some drippy outfit (basketball shorts and t-shirt) and Liam brings a speaker to bump tunes throughout the day. This is when Mr. Bachynsky is in the classroom so we can't participate in any dilly-dallying quite yet — that will have to wait for later.

3 p.m.: Oliver leaves for volleyball and Mr. B leaves to "pick up the kids"

Choking back tears, we editors bid Oliver goodbye, and though he doesn't typically show it, we know that Oliver is doing the same — *on the inside*. His farewell is an unavoidable reminder of the harsh, cutthroat world that is St. Augustine

High School clubs. How can one Saintsmen choose to spend his time between the most important job on God's green earth *and* volleyball? To us other editors, the choice of what should be prioritized seems blatantly obvious.

Mr. B, on the other hand, usually heads out to pick up his kids. We are convinced it is actually to go to *The Godfather Part III* fanclub and rant about his several seconds of screentime, a convenient way to get out of editing articles with a bunch of teenagers who can't run a mile in under 7 minutes (except George).

4 p.m.: The editors play hacky sack for an hour

One doesn't get to be the *crème de la crème* without perfecting their foot-eye coordination. Editing is a battle of the mind, and so entering the proper mindset through physical activity is crucial for peak performance.

Prior to each bout, we quietly ponder in sadness if, somewhere in the world, there is a sack not being hackied. With a new sense of purpose, everyone gets to work... for about ten minutes.

Liam and Henry then leave to go on a 20 minute walk around campus, during which they have some deep conversations and (fail to) make some baskets up on the rooftop courts.

5 p.m.: Chicken, waffles, and headlines

ALI'S CHICKEN AND WAFFLES MENTIONED. It wasn't until this Gulag that Ben tried the medium spice and it is beyond comparison. A staple of each Gulag since Liam and Ben's freshman year, chicken and waffles make the world go round. We wouldn't have half of the articles unless Ben got fed. He typically also gets his best headline ideas out of these

feasting sessions, so some ROI is there to justify blowing some of the school's money to make sure we don't go malnourished and starve.

6 p.m.: Oliver comes back, then leaves five minutes later and we hold a funeral

We have a brief party to celebrate the return of our favorite Mormon, only for him to leave again. When we say that we hold a funeral, we really just try to make as many balled up paper towels into the recycling bin as possible. Or markers into the phone-jail pockets. Really any trick-shot imaginable we do for the next hour in memory of our fallen editor.

7 p.m.: Enzo's photo shoot

Enzo runs the newspaper's Instagram (@stanewspaper), and as seen by his frequent (once per six months) posts, he has copious photos to share news of the upcoming publication: Mr. B. dancing, Ben getting kicked in the shins (while doing an irish jig), Liam making some weird face — we are CLEARLY locked in.

This is also when we start getting a little goofy, as the five hours of sleep start catching up and we realize that we still have five chapters of AP Gov work to do tonight. We look to our delusions and the power of the happy high to get us through the rest of the night, and boy does it make for some memorable moments.

8 p.m.: Hard Edit

This is where it gets real. The boys head to the War Room (the teacher's lounge in Vasey) and whip out the colored pens. We see the paper in print for the first time and tear it to shreds. That is NOT how you spell Mr. Hearn's name and Henry Barwick is NOT editor-in-chief (despite several attempted coups).

With the paper all marked up, we head back to Mr. B's room. We like to blast music to drown out whatever obscenity is coming from the corner while Liam wrestles with our layout software InDesign.

8:59 p.m.: Liam panics to send file to our printer

Sometimes the ancient technology of USB from the land of B is utilized. Since its last use in 246 BC, USB drives can save an issue with Dropbox (which fails to work about as often as the McDonald's ice cream machine is up and running).

9 p.m.: The entire editing staff crams in Henry's car

The car where the magic happens. A random mixture of 70s pop and 80s rock begins to play, with Enzo recording the whole interaction (for Instagramming purposes, of course), and Ben squeezing in the middle seat, is a sight for the eyes. We are probably the reason that Mr. Hearn gets so many emails expressing very kind and definitely PG-rated words about their wonderful students. Sorry Mr. Hearn, but boys just wanna have fun.

Side note: BRING BACK LATE NIGHT THURSDAYS! We have never been more tired than staying until 9 every day, just saying.

9:07 p.m.: Realize everything is wrong

This is when the realization falls in: we made SOOOOOO many errors. Too many to count. We thought we fixed it in hard edit, but in reality the worst errors slip through the cracks of our tired, half-delirious minds. It is at this point that we pray to the editors before us for forgiveness and hope that no up-and-coming underclassman is proofreading anything.

The horror! The horror! The horror!

2026-2027 Editorial Staff

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MANAGING EDITOR

Cole Dolin ('27)
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