

# The Cistercian Informer

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## In This Issue



### IN NEST: Digital Music Club

Another Cistercian club enters the fold!



### IN EDITORIALS: A Conservative SCOTUS

Two differing views on a divisive issue



### IN NEWS: Election Fraud?

Proof still not found



### IN SPORTS: USMNT Status

The future of American national soccer is looking up



### IN MIDDLE SCHOOL: Fixing the Cowboys

Yes, it's possible



### IN ARTS: Art in Quarantine

The brilliance of artists in isolation

## Meet Mr. Lewis

Ayden Kowalski, '21, who strikes again with a stellar interview.

Cistercian welcomed several new teachers this past year, among them Mr. Lewis, who teaches Latin and Music in Middle School. The Informer sat down with him to learn a little bit of his story and to hear his unique voice in a special performance.

### So, what brought you to Cistercian?

I've known about Cistercian for a long time. I was a student at the University of Dallas, graduating in '07. And I was a retreat house guide at Cistercian, on the premises cooking breakfast for the monks and answering the phones for them. So, I've known them for many years; Father Paul reached out to me last autumn when he found out that the long-standing music teacher would be leaving, and he asked me if I would be interested in the job, which I obviously was.

### Did you major in music at University of Dallas?



Photo From Mr. Lewis

At University of Dallas, I majored in English, concentrating in Latin, so it comes in handy now teaching Latin at Cistercian. But I got my master's in sacred music choral conducting at the Catholic University of America.

### What drew you to specifically sacred music?

I always loved it. At the University of Dallas, I sang in the polyphonic

ensemble Collegium Cantorum and also in the Schola Cantorum under Father Ralph March at Cistercian. And especially in those two venues, I really came to know the beauty and richness of the sacred music compendium in church.

### What drew you to Latin instead of English?

Continued on Page 2

## A Conservative SCOTUS? Opinion: Bad for the USA

Saish Satyal, '21.

In 2017, President Donald Trump appointed Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court to replace Antonin Scalia. In 2018, he appointed Brett Kavanaugh to replace Anthony Kennedy. Finally in 2020, he appointed Amy Coney Barrett to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Before I begin on my views of the conservative Court, I must tip my hat to the Democrats in the Senate—I'm not quite sure I've ever seen a group of people so good at being walked all over. The fact that Merrick Garland was blocked in 2016 and Amy Coney Barrett was pushed through in 2020 doesn't have them out for blood is baffling. They just let it happen. Merrick Garland was blocked because it was an "election year" and the president should (in theory) not appoint a Justice in that year. Yet ACB was confirmed in October of 2020, while ballots were actively being sent in during a general election. The fact that they

weren't threatening to unleash hell still stuns me to this day.

Apart from the disappointing actions of the Democrats, the question we must now turn to is the way the Court rules on certain issues. We've all heard of *Citizens United v. FEC*, in which the conservative Roberts SCOTUS ruled in a 5-4 majority that *Citizens United*, an independent conservative entity, was allowed to air a movie criticizing Hillary Clinton close to the presidential primaries. While this particular instance may seem constitutionally sound, the results have been disastrous for democracy. It now allows for corporations and the ultra-wealthy to finance political action committees (PACs) which can then spend a ton of money for candidates, whether it involves donating directly to them or talking about "the issues." If a PAC does not donate directly to, or coordinate with, a specific candidate or party, they can then raise unlimited amounts of money from whomever they want.

Continued on Page 3

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## Meet Mr. Lewis (Cont'd)

All along, I had enjoyed Latin ever since I was young and studying here. And then at the University of Dallas, I was taking Latin for my language before realizing that if I just took three upper level courses, I could concentrate in it, which was to my advantage later on when I got to teach Latin.

**You majored in English with a Latin concentration; did you only read Latin or did you read the Latin with a separate English translation?**

I have an English class and separately from the Latin one, because the Latin ones are in the original text. And a concentration at the University of Dallas is sort of like saying a minor.

**What is your favorite part of teaching Latin?**

My favorite part of teaching Latin is experiencing the enthusiasm of the students in the classroom as they make connections and discoveries in the language.

**You've actually sung for those of us in the Renaissance senior seminar. So what drew you specifically to polyphonic Renaissance music?**

Collegium Cantorum, going back to those days at undergrad at the University of Dallas was very pivotal, as has been singing in the ensemble Chantry, an early music ensemble in Washington, D.C., which specializes in Gregorian chant and sacred polyphony.

**As a deep student of Renaissance music, is there anything from Renaissance music that you think should be a little more prevalent in popular music today?**

Ooh, that's a good question. Actually, I keep talking with my music appreciation class about imitative counterpoint, where a subject will happen in one voice and then be echoed in another one. So, I think I'd like to hear that more often.

**When you say subject, you mean like a musical phrase, like a sequence of notes?**

Exactly. And this can maybe happen in the soprano voice and then be echoed in the bass voice, for instance. But I like that interplay and the connectivity that it engenders, in a more polyphonic structure rather than homophony, which is sort of the vertical composition that we commonly hear today.

**You liked the ability that polyphony has to allow for interplay between a great number of voices and the unique constructions that offers, instead of just having one melody and everything else is the harmony or just support?**

Absolutely correct. So they have a lot of autonomy while still combining in intervals. It allows for a greater complexity and depth in each of the songs we listen to.

**What is your favorite part of teaching music?**



Photo From Mr. Lewis

My favorite part of teaching music is experiencing the joy and camaraderie that making music affords.

**Are there any songs you'd be willing to sing for us today?**

I can sing the opening phrase from *Nessun Dorma*, which is a very popular tenor aria from the operatic world.

[The fantastic clip of Mr. Lewis singing is on the Informer website. Check it out!]

*This interview has been edited for clarity and flow.*

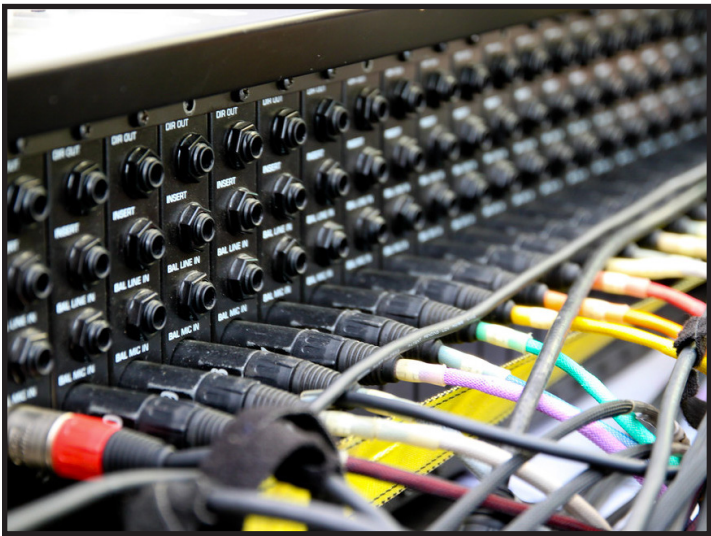


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*Leo Ontiveros, '22, who wants to share his love of music with all.*

Hans Zimmer, Toby Fox, Kanye West —what do they all have in common? They love music. Because of their love, they are regarded as some of the best composers of the 21st century. While I do not consider myself among their ranks in terms of skill and fame, I would claim that my passion for music rivals theirs. In an effort to share my passion with others, I decided to start the Digital Music Production club at Cistercian.

Not only do I love music, I've also been creating my own musical compositions for a few years. This summer, thanks to COVID,

those higher end programs, such as *FL Studio*, were on a whole new level. After hours of tinkering around and teaching myself the various shortcuts of the DAWs, I became skilled at handling the software by the start of the school year.

One day during English class, Mr. Nied told us that his son, Mr. Joseph Nied, was a sound designer, and he said that he was working here at Cistercian. When the senior Mr. Nied casually asked if anyone was interested in sound design, a light bulb blinked on over my head. The next day, I went over to junior Mr. Nied's office and presented him with the idea of a sound design club. Funnily enough, he had formed a club just like this one when he was at Cistercian as well;

## New Digital Music Club

I found myself stuck at home, and I eventually discovered music production software, also known as DAWs (Digital Audio Workspaces). I was already familiar with *GarageBand*, but

to my delight, he gladly became the club sponsor. We were able to bring the club to Mr. Novinski for approval, and I was able to prepare an announcement for the Freshman class. I recruited Ayden Kowalski, a fellow music producer, as my co-founder, and we gave our presentation to the new members of the Upper School. The rest is history.

I knew I was not the only one who wanted to master how to produce music. There are a lot of people who share my love for music and I'm sure they want to learn new music producing software; I'm sure that a few of them have used music programs before as well. Mr. Nied is doing a fantastic thing for the school and will be showing us how to use *FL Studio*, the program he used in his own club. *FL Studio* is not only a great beginner program, but it is also a good challenge for veteran producers. If they're interested, anyone that joins the club will become an *FL Studio* professional.

However, this club is not just for learning the music software; we are also heavily dependent on projects. Each member, when he is familiarized with the software, should

be able to create their own music. We will be sharing our projects with each other, commenting on them, and asking questions to the presenter about how they were able to do a particular thing in their song. While this year is limiting, I would love for the members of our club to eventually be able to play their music for a crowd. When things return to normal, I'd love for a few of our guys to participate in Coffeehouse, the Spring Talent Show, or even at ISAS. We're the Digital Music Production club, we can't produce music without an audience! I know that if our members are able to display their performances, we will be one of the greatest clubs ever at Cistercian. If anyone is interested, please do not hesitate to join. You don't have to know music theory to be a part of the DMP club, all you need is a willingness to learn and produce music. Just contact me, Leo Ontiveros, class of 2022, at my Cistercian email if you would like to join; we'll be happy to have you!



## Opinion: Bad (Cont'd)

These are called Super PACs, and they should scare you. One only needs to look at the amount of money being spent on recent elections to determine that *Citizens United v. FEC* has been terrible for the American public. While this could be an indictment of the SCOTUS as a whole, the liberal in me is inclined to point out the fact that the liberal bloc on the Court voted against *Citizens United*, possibly because they foresaw the dangerous precedent of ultra-wealthy entities being able to do whatever they wanted in the realm of politics.

Turning away from *Citizens United*, we're going to move to something that should be taking more of a front seat, especially in light of the election: *Shelby County v. Holder*. Essentially, the SCOTUS ruled part of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 unconstitutional because of a formula it held in which areas with histories of voter discrimination would be subject to federal oversight if they attempted to change voting procedures. The conservative Court ruled, once again in a 5-4 majority, that this section of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional because

it was outdated. Essentially, the conservative bloc argued that these states had been good for 40 years and the fact that they already had a history of voter discrimination was not enough. The dissenting opinion, written by the late Ruth Bader Ginsburg, provided the perfect analogy when it stated that this argument was tantamount to "throwing away your umbrella in a rainstorm because you are not getting wet." Perhaps the reason that these states had not been discriminatory against minority voters since 1960 was because it was illegal to do so? I would love to point the conservative bloc towards the 2018 elections in Georgia, in which the Secretary of State (Brian Kemp, also the current governor) purged 700k voters from the rolls in 2017 alone after purging a total of 1.4 million voters from 2012 to 2018. Of course, the entire state of Georgia was covered as "discriminatory" under Section 5, the very part of the act they repealed. To be fair, they left the road open for Congress in 2013 to pass a new Voting Rights Act using a more updated formula. At the moment, the current House has an updated version of the Act

which was passed in 2019. It's been introduced by Democrats in the Senate and is sitting on Mitch McConnell's desk, ready for a vote.

Dominic Andrews ('21) argues that originalism, a principle often touted by conservatives, is the best approach to the Constitution. He makes a fair argument and you should read his article. However, originalism sticks to the vision of the Constitution and of our government that the Founding Fathers had. They decided that the principle of limited government was best, since government was the biggest threat to the rights of the people in 1789. While they wrote the Constitution as a living, breathing document because they knew the world would change, they did not foresee how quickly that would happen. The 20th century began with the invention of radio and ended with thermonuclear bombs and an International Space Station. As Alexander Hamilton



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himself argued in his Federalist #1, we need a vigorous and energetic government to protect our liberties. In this terrifying world, the originalist principle of limited government cannot protect our liberties from malicious entities. The Constitution, meant to limit the power of a tyrannical government, allows for the shadow government that spies on its own citizens, but it apparently cannot protect the voting rights of its own citizens. In short, it's time to review what it means to be strict in adherence to that document.

*\*The views expressed within this article are those of the author and not necessarily those of Cistercian or The Cistercian Informer.\**



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Dominic Andrews, '21.

The question "What does it mean to be a conservative Supreme Court justice?" is misguided. The reason for this is that those justices appointed by Republican presidents view their job as removed from their own personal beliefs. Thus, being a liberal or conservative has nothing to do with their rulings. To understand where they are coming from requires us to look at what it truly means to be a justice.

What is the role of the Supreme Court? According to the Supreme Court website, the Supreme Court is "the final arbiter of the law, the Court is charged with ensur-

ing the American people the promise of equal justice under law and, thereby, also functions as guardian and interpreter of the Constitution." Their role is to protect the American people by guarding the Constitution. The Constitution is not a set of laws for the American people. The Constitution is the law that governs those who govern us. The Constitution was established to protect our rights as Americans. The Supreme Court, therefore, plays an important role in protecting those rights. This poses the question: how should one interpret the words of the Constitution? Those "conservative," Republican-appointed justices would claim that originalism is the best way to interpret the Constitution. Originalism is the idea that we should interpret the Constitution based on its original meaning. Justice Gorsuch explains that originalism deals with the *process*, not the substance

## A Conservative SCOTUS? Opinion: Good for the USA

of any given case. A justices' job is to conserve the Constitution in its original intent, no matter on which "side" the ruling happens to fall when considered from this angle. Yet why should we interpret the Constitution in such a way? The basis of originalism presupposes that the original framers (and the Reconstruction framers) got it, in essence, right. Not only that, but the framers themselves made it very clear that originalism was the best way to interpret the Constitution which they themselves had written. To quote the author of the Constitution, James Madison: "In the exposition of laws, and even of Constitutions, how many important errors may be produced by mere innovations in the use of words and phrases, if not controlled by a recurrence to the original and authentic meaning attached to them!" The Constitution is supposed to be a long-lasting, enduring document that got things mostly right. That in no way means that the Constitution cannot be subject to change. Rather, in section five of the Constitution, the framers clearly lay out the way

in which the Constitution can be legally amended, instead of simply interpreted in a different way. In short, a living Constitution would only be necessary if there was no way to change the actual Constitution. Originalists, therefore, by definition try their best to not inject their own personal values into a ruling. Former Justice Scalia, for example, was opposed to flag burning yet voted with the majority in *Texas v. Johnson* that allowed citizens, under their First Amendment right, to burn the flag. The original meaning of the words can also be applied to new meanings and new developments. Take, for example, the First Amendment. The First Amendment holds that freedom of speech should not be prohibited. Taken originally, the First Amendment protected speech. This can and should be applied to speech on the internet. Though the internet was not what the founders had in mind, originalism, nonetheless, can meet these challenges. Is originalism merely a Conservative Ploy to control the coun-



## Opinion: Good (Cont'd)

try? No. If it really was a Conservative ploy, then abortion would have already been outlawed. Originalist opposition to *Roe v. Wade* stems not on morality, but on the actual constitutionality of the decision. Originalists want to return to what the Constitution says, and therefore laws, such as abortion, should be left to the democratic and legislative process, instead of in the hands of nine unelected justices.

To know why and how originalists make their conclusions can, at times, be difficult. My easiest defense is saying that these cases aren't as black and white as some would portray, and to paint them as wholly evil or wrong would be contrary to the reality of the situation. One case that Saish Satyal ('21) brings up is *Shelby County v. Holder* (2013) in which the Supreme Court ruled that section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act was unconstitutional, which virtually nullified Section 5 of the act at the same time. The majority opinion, written by Chief Justice Roberts, argued that the 40-year-old formula, which had not changed at all, should not apply to today's standards. Perhaps the originalists

thought that times had changed, but maybe they were too optimistic. The point, however, is that measures such as Section 4(b) and 5 should only be used in emergency circumstances, and not fall into frequent or natural use. In fact, in *South Carolina v. Katzenbach* (1966) the court ruled that Section 5 was a valid use of the Fifteenth Amendment, reasoning that only under extreme cases of racial discrimination and the clear inadequacy of case-by-case litigation to stop the discrimination could justify the use of Section 5, and thus allow it to stay in effect. The question, however, is whether or not those same provisions should ultimately stay in effect.

Saish also quotes Federalist #1 about the necessity of a vigorous and energetic government to ensure our liberties. I would ask, what does a vigorous and energetic government exactly entail? For the Founders, it clearly meant a limited government. If Hamilton did not believe that the Constitution would allow for a vigorous government, then he would have advocated for it so strongly, or even at all. Now, is today's government vigorous and

energetic? Perhaps it is, but in any case we should be wary of concentrating too much power into the government. He even points out in his article that the US government spies on its citizens, and argues that the Constitution allows for that. However, that is categorically false. The Fourth Amendment clearly prohibits the government from doing such things. If we returned to the Constitution, our liberties would thus be better preserved than they are today. Also, not ensuring voting rights is also a violation of the Constitution. Originalism, therefore, seeking to *defend* the Constitution, should be seen as better to the alternatives which allow for such potential government power. Originalists, with their limited knowledge and foresight, may not correctly defend the Constitution, but the reality remains that such cases would be in conflict with originalism in the first place. Originalists may fail, but if we



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made a return to our founding documents, the rights and liberties of every American would be ensured.

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*Aidan Smith, '24, who sees France in religious turmoil.*

Earlier this year in October, a teacher in a suburb of Paris was decapitated by a Muslim refugee for showing his students a cartoon. The same cartoon was shown in an article five years earlier by the French newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*, where 12 people were murdered by two Muslims shortly after it was published. Why? Because they depicted Muhammed, the founder of Islam, often disrespectfully, which in itself is considered highly blasphemous to most Muslims. Shortly after *Charlie Hebdo* published it, France was forced to temporarily close over 20 embassies and schools in many

and not only allowed those caricatures to be republished, but some went further - including a few who announced they would distribute booklets containing those caricatures to high school students. These moves, however, only proved to make matters worse, having turned France's people against each other.

Many countries, including the U.S., have even advised France against going further. Not long after the beheading in Paris, three more people were killed by a Muslim immigrant from Tunisia, this time in the main Basilica of the French city of Nice. Shortly after, what began as a gathering of 50 people mourning for the loss of the dead turned into a full-scale protest that blamed Islam for the attack. The mayor of

## Tension in France

Muslim nations, who in turn boycotted French goods, gaining the attention of the rest of the world.

But French officials looked at this issue as a terrorist attack,

Nice openly supported the protests, claiming, "We're at war, against an enemy both inside and outside." These attacks, especially the one on *Charlie Hebdo*, led to massive protests throughout France, in which protesters held signs that said "Je Suis Charlie" or "I am Charlie."

The republication of the pictures also caused massive opposition, especially after French President Emmanuel Macron gave a powerful speech explaining that he would do what he could to crack down on "Islamism." This proved to have a negative effect and changed the perspective of many people who used to support that cause. In response to the speech, Anne Giudicelli, a French expert on the Arab world, claimed, "The publication and republication are not the same thing." Also, in response to the speech, a Muslim murdered two people protesting outside the *Charlie Hebdo* offices and another murdered another teacher showing depictions of Muhammed, including one showing him naked on all fours.

Freedom of expression has steadily become a pillar of France's secularism, or *laïcité*. But is it appro-

priate to oppress religion just because it opposes secularism? France also has laws preventing discrimination against someone's race or religion, but many officials seem to have turned a blind eye to it.

As French politician Clémentine Autain puts it, the debate over terrorism and secularism "is dominated by emotion and is no longer rational." Both sides are becoming more and more radical on the issue, and she claims French officials are using it as a way to "ostracize Muslims." On the other end, Muslims are using it as a way to protest France's opposition to religion and oppression of people who violate their meaning of "freedom of expression." But really, what does "freedom of expression" mean? Both sides have their own meaning of it, causing this issue to escalate to what it is today.

Currently, 14 people accused of helping the *Charlie Hebdo* murderers are being tried in court, which started on September 2nd of this year. This issue, clearly, is far from over.



## Election Fraud?

*Coby Scrudder, '21, who has done a thorough examination.*

*[Please note that some of the content mentioned in this article has already been addressed or resolved!]*

When looking at the 2020 Presidential Election and analyzing it for fraud, there is not currently a lot of evidence in support of it, which makes having an unbiased take on it difficult. In order to try to achieve that in this article, I will be referencing reputable news sources, primary sources, and court hearings and will not be making my own conclusions on anything. This article is solely to put the evidence before everyone to let you make an opinion based on what we know at the moment, which will change in the future. In this article, I will talk about the many lawsuits that have been raised by the Trump campaign, among others, as well as presenting the facts on some of the popular theories that are going around. With that being said, let us begin.

November 3rd was an election for the history books. We all knew that it would last far beyond election day and that there would be many lawsuits after it. And that is what we are facing right now. As it stands, the AP has called the race in favor of Biden. If these results stand, regardless of the vote in states such as GA or NC, Biden would be our next president. However, the question on everyone's mind is "Will these votes stand?" Sadly, this seems to have become a partisan issue recently, and the Trump campaign has levied lawsuits in six states to try to prove that the elections were fraudulent. Let's examine these by state.

**ARIZONA:** While Biden currently leads Arizona by a margin of 0.32%, the Trump campaign is suing, currently seeking the manual inspection of ballots that it claims were mishandled by poll workers. This lawsuit is currently waiting to be heard, but the Secretary of State of Arizona believes that it will be dismissed like a similar lawsuit over the use of sharpies to mark ballots.

**GEORGIA:** Georgia has become an unlikely battleground as Biden only leads by a margin of 0.28%. The Trump campaign has had one lawsuit dismissed after no evidence was found to back their claim that ballots received after the deadline of 7pm were mixed in with legitimate ballots from before the deadline. In response to this, the

two Republican Senators from Georgia, currently seeking reelection themselves, called for the resignation of the Georgia Secretary of State over his alleged mishandling of the election, with no evidence to back up said claim. Georgia is having a manual recount done and the results of that will be known by November 20th.

**MICHIGAN:** With Biden leading by a slim margin of 0.65%, the Trump campaign has raised many suits in Michigan. They sued early on to stop the vote count and to stop the certification of the results, both of which have been denied due to a lack of evidence. However, the Trump team has raised even more suits, claiming that there was bias among the poll workers who they claim were wearing Black Lives Matter masks and were rolling their eyes when people voted Trump. These cases have not had hearings scheduled and there has been no evidence so far that these actions led to a change in the vote totals.

**NEVADA:** This state, where Biden leads by 0.75%, has been sued by the Trump team many times. They have wanted to stop processing mail-in ballots, stop using an optical scanner to verify signatures, and slow down the vote counting in Clark County as a result of "irregularities." However, the Trump campaign has found some success here, successfully petitioning to add more observers to Clark County, but ultimately changing no votes.

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Another close race where Biden leads by only 0.83%, the Trump campaign has filed at least 15 legal challenges. The most important of these revolve around the issue of when the mail-in ballot deadline is. This was extended to November 6th by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court and the Trump team is challenging this in court. The campaign recently won a small victory in disqualifying first-time mail in ballots where the ID was confirmed after November 9th, but it is unknown how many ballots this will disqualify. Another pending lawsuit includes one trying to stop the certification of results because of fraud, but the lawsuit itself did not have any evidence within it. Even if these lawsuits do get ruled in Trump's favor, it is not predicted that this will change the race as it is estimated that only 10,000 ballots may be affected, and Trump is losing by over 50,000.

**WISCONSIN:** With Biden leading by 0.63%, it is expected that

Trump will request a recount in the coming days. While it does not appear that any lawsuits have been raised, many Republicans are calling foul play for a variety of reasons, ranging from an error in the AP vote recording that gave Trump over 19,000 extra votes for a moment before taking them away, to a state law that was changed in June that changed how long a voter had to live in their current residence before voting (from 10 to 28 days).

Outside of these legal challenges there have been a couple of theories about the election fraud that have gained traction recently, especially given their backing in seemingly sound math. The first is the Benford's Law idea.

Benford's Law is an idea from statistics that if you find the leading digit of a set of numbers spread over multiple orders of magnitude, then the leading digit will be "1" almost 33% of the time, "2" around 18% of the time, "3" about 12% of the time, and so forth. A popular right-wing article claimed to have evidence that when counting the votes for Michigan precincts, Trump's data perfectly matches Benford's law, whereas Biden's does not, so therefore there is fraud. There are many problems with this. First, in this article, we can see that the author uses different data sets for his analysis of Trump (616 data points) and Biden (630 data points). We also do not know if this data is sufficiently spread out enough for Benford's Law to apply. However, there is an even greater problem. Benford's Law cannot be used to detect election fraud. To quote from a 2011 article titled "Benford's Law and the Detection of Election Fraud" written by professors at the University of Oregon and the California Institute of Technology, "Its 'success rate' either way is essentially equivalent to a toss of a coin, thereby rendering it problematical at best as a forensic tool and wholly misleading at worst."

The second theory that has gained traction recently comes from a video by Dr. Shiva Ayyadurai, who is running for Senate as a Republican in Massachusetts and has a PhD in biological engineering from MIT. In his video, he claims that by analyzing the results of multiple Michigan counties by individual



*Photo From Creative Commons*

precinct, as a precinct becomes more Republican, more and more people stray from party line and do not vote for Trump. This happens at a linear rate and he claims that this must be because of a weighted ballot feature that many of these voting machines must include because one voting machine back in 2001 had this feature. He claims that this means that over 138,000 ballots were stolen from Trump. While this seems like it may be a sound argument, many people have problems with this argument. First, these voting machines have weighted ballot features (where, for example, a single vote could count for two votes) so that they can be used at shareholder meetings, where this feature is necessary. Another argument against Dr. Shiva is that his hypotheses that we should expect a constant relationship between party-line Republican voters and Trump voters is wrong. An argument against this is that, given how divisive Trump has been, Republicans have a higher probability than normal to not vote for him, so as a precinct becomes more Republican, more people would defect and not vote for him. However, it seems that for now, no evidence has come out to support Dr. Shiva's claim, although there could be some in the future.

In conclusion, this election has played out similarly to how everyone thought it would. Trump has continued his accusations that the election is fraudulent and has been throwing the book at every state that he thinks could flip. Many conspiracy theories have popped up online supporting his claims that the election was fraudulent. Given the evidence that we have now, it appears that it is not. However, anything could happen, and Trump keeps claiming that he has more evidence. Yet as of right now, we don't know what that evidence is, so all I can leave you with is the fact that this election is far from over and will be one of the most interesting of our lifetimes.



## A Bad MVP Choice

*Tarun Senthil-Kumar, '23, who thinks the award needs redefining.*

The NBA's MVP award is the most coveted individual achievement a player can receive. Voted on by media members, the award considers many factors, however, some of these have come into question. The 2020 MVP race epitomized these problems tarnishing the award's value. Giannis Antetokounmpo of the Milwaukee Bucks ran away with MVP, earning 85 first place votes, while LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers finished second with only 16 first place votes.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the award, the MVP only accounts for the regular season, neglecting the season's summit: the Playoffs. Over 50% of teams make the Playoffs, so performing well in the regular season should not be the award's foundation. The disparity of competition between the East and West is embarrassing. Despite enduring a tougher conference and schedule, LeBron's Lakers only finished 4 games behind Giannis's Bucks. Furthermore, the real mar-

quee matchups are in the Playoffs, not the regular season. The best players miss regular season games due to "load management," and touch the ball more in the Playoffs, shedding an even brighter spotlight on the true MVP. Giannis was eliminated by the Heat 4-1 in the semifinals this year while LeBron won the championship and Finals MVP. LeBron beats Giannis in Playoff value.

Most of these media "experts" decide their vote solely based upon a player's stats, relating them to his value to the team, which abides by the award's definition. Analysts refer to the league's most popular stat, PER, or Player Efficiency Rating, which measures the overall contribution a player makes. This season, Giannis averaged the highest PER in NBA history, and the media rushed to award him for it. PER is calculated via a complex formula that takes a player's season averages into consideration, however, it possesses glaring flaws. It overvalues rebounds, allowing big men like Giannis to have higher PERs than guards, and volume players, empowering Giannis, who lacks a true second star, while slighting LeBron,

who shares the ball with Anthony Davis. Also, PER is calculated on a per-minute basis. It recognizes garbage time just as much as the last minute of the Finals. Analysts value the wrong stats and should consider impact stats such as plus-minus, which LeBron led in, rather than contextless season averages. Though this factor is oversold, LeBron beats Giannis statistically.

The narrative is the most unique factor of every MVP's season. Controlled by the community, it considers random storylines. Derrick Rose won because he challenged the Heat Big Three. Steph Curry won because he revolutionized how the game was played. Russell Westbrook won as a 7th seed because of Kevin Durant's departure. Observing these three MVP seasons, the narrative changed, and with it, so did the criteria for winning MVP. Additionally, the narrative generates voter fatigue once a player wins the



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award. Though this factor means less than the others, neither of the candidates benefit from this factor more than the other.

With how the MVP is voted on and what it stands for nowadays, the award does not matter. If a player plays well in the regular season, puts up the correct stats, and controls a favorable narrative, he will win the MVP. If the NBA wants the award to matter again, they need to prioritize Playoff success first, stats second, and narrative third. This year, for example, LeBron James should have won the MVP, not Giannis Antetokounmpo. In conclusion, the MVP award considers the correct factors but wrongly prioritizes them, and the award has ended up in the wrong hands in 2020.



*Photo From Creative Commons*

*Maxwell Vaughan, '21, who sees great potential.*

The United States Men's National team has not played a game since February 1st. Yet on Thursday, November 12, The Yanks were back in action versus Wales. This time around, there is a lot to be excited about for these friendlies. Due to travel restrictions on MLS players (because their playoffs are coming up), the squad that Gregg Berhalter called up is made up of a much younger, mostly European-based group of players. In fact, the latest roster is the youngest roster (21 years, 300 days) of any top-150 ranked country. Among the players called up, ten are uncapped (have

not made an appearance for the national team), and twelve are 20 years of age or younger. So, we could be getting a glimpse here at America's future stars and the potential squads for the 2022 and 2026 World Cups. Naturally, this warrants a breakdown.

The most interesting player in this 24-man roster is Yunus Musah. The 17-year-old, New York native grew up in Italy and England, where he shined in Arsenal's Youth Teams. He is eligible to play for Ghana, Italy, England, and the United States. The fact that Musah chose the United States (for right now) over two prestigious teams like Italy and England is evidence of the promise and allure that the USMNT has. Musah plays his club football for Valencia in Spain, and has impressed in his first appearances for Los Murcielagos, becoming the youngest non-Spanish player to score for them. He can play either as a winger or a box-to-box midfielder.

## USMNT Status

He is a workhorse who likes to cover a lot of ground, is very athletic, and is a good passer. Unfortunately, though, his acceptance of this call-up does not make him permanently American. Since these games are only friendlies, he can make a one-time switch to another national team that he is eligible for. England is playing in the European Championships this summer, and I fear that a call-up would easily sway him to joining England. If he stays with the USMNT, however, he has the promise to play a key role in the next two World Cups.

As I mentioned earlier, ten players on this roster (at the time of writing this) are uncapped. Thus, we are getting our first look at some exciting prospects like Gio Reyna and Konrad de la Fuente. Reyna has been on fire for Borussia Dortmund, becoming the youngest player in Bundesliga history to have three assists in a game. He has been vital in Dortmund's attack, creating a great partnership with young Danish striker Erling Haaland. Reyna has the potential to be the best ever American player. He is doing things on the pitch that very few other

teenagers are doing. Konrad, just 19, is finally a full-fledged member of the Barcelona first team this season. Although he is yet to make an appearance, he impressed in preseason and has made several appearances on the bench. The young winger could help bolster our attack for years to come.

These friendlies will also serve as a chance for Berhalter to figure out who fits in the vacant striker position. I hope from the bottom of my heart that the days of Jozy Altidore, Jordan Morris, and Gyasi Zardes are over, or at least I hope they will be by the 2022 World Cup. Regardless, Berhalter needs to find a reliable number 9. Josh Sargent of Werder Bremen seems like the best candidate, but his club declined to release him for the friendlies due to their COVID-19 policies. So, Berhalter called up 20-year-old strikers Sebastian Soto (Telstar) and Nicholas Gioacchini (Caen). They are both young, raw, and unproven, but they have a chance to show the manager what they can do. All in all, this is easily the most exciting and promising group of players that the United States has ever fielded.



# Fixing the Cowboys

Dylan Kowalski & Drake Manos, '26, who see issues.

The Dallas Cowboys are one of the most beloved sports teams. Five-time champions, they have a decorated history, however, in the past 25 years, the Cowboys have failed to reach an NFC championship game. This season, quarterback Dak Prescott, who led the league in passing yards, suffered a season ending ankle injury. Not only have the Cowboys lost some tough games, but they were also crushed by their divisional rivals. Though 2 - 7 is one of the worst starts they have ever had, there is a solution.

The Cowboys are a complete mess on both sides of the ball. Since Dak's injury, the Cowboys have already featured three quarterbacks. Except for the wide receivers, the offense has been disappointing. With injuries to the line, Ezekiel Elliot has struggled. The defense has been abysmal with missed tackles, minimal pass rush, and blown coverages. Whether they tank or not, the Cowboys will have one of the worst records in the league, winning less

than four games. Missing the playoffs, they will get a top pick in the draft.

The Cowboys have many possibilities in the draft and offseason. They have 27 expiring contracts to address including Dak Prescott's. To evaluate Prescott, they should franchise tag him for another year and let him prove his worth. With Dallas's current woes, his value has gone up. Next, they should trade Ezekiel Elliot to a team that needs a RB like the Arizona Cardinals, who could take on Zeke's heavy salary and return 1st and 2nd round picks along with a defensive back. This allows for the Cowboys to draft a RB whose rookie salary helps the salary cap. Turning to the coaching staff, Dallas must fire Mike Nolan. His defense prior to this year was ranked at the bottom of the league (2014 Atlanta Falcons). McCarthy only hired him because of their friendship. Offensive Coordinator Kellen Moore, who is favored by Dak Prescott, is hard to fire at the moment. His offense has ranked highly every year in his tenure with the Cowboys, but his game plan needs to improve and include more running

plays to alleviate Prescott's burden. Firing McCarthy is unfair as well because of all the roster's injury setbacks. Jerry Jones himself has stated multiple times that McCarthy will return, so it should be considered set in stone.

In this upcoming draft, the Dallas Cowboys will have a variety of options. The most popular among fans, Option One is to select a quarterback like Trevor Lawrence or Justin Fields. Option Two is to trade Ezekiel Elliot for a lineman or linebacker and some picks on draft night. A guard like Quenton Nelson from the Colts or a pick from the Cardinals would be ideal. The most likely one, Option Three is to trade all assets for multiple first rounders, just as the Raiders did with Khalil Mack and Amari Cooper. An ancient but clever route straight from the 90's (Herschel Walker), the Cowboys could employ the first two options and trade Zeke and the QB we draft (Fields or Lawrence) for a



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bevy of assets. It would be foolish for Jerry to draft a quarterback and keep him when Prescott will return next season as a seasoned veteran and proven leader. Also, Dallas needs to inject life into its once-great offensive line via the draft to aid the injury-prone Tyron Smith, Zach Martin, and La'el Collins. Lastly, having missed out Jamal Adams this year, they could also reshape the defense with a trade from a top QB pick. In the event that the Cowboys do not draft a top QB, they should select a defensive back in the first 1st round draft pick from the Zeke trade. All in all, both of the authors feel that this plan will help the Dallas Cowboys return into definite playoff contention.



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## CDC Says Cruises Can Set Sail Again But Passengers Will Not Be Allowed On Board

Some cruise ships are going to take the CDC up on their offer, especially since the CDC is actually allowing 250 passengers (maximum) to be on board. When they do, I will invite you all to attend my funeral; the cause of death will be multiple blood vessels being popped in my brain out of rage. Cruise ships are terrifying polluters of the environment and large cruise-liner corporations mistreat their employees with rules that hearken back to the American Gilded Age. Enough about the cruise industry, please return to the funny headline.

# Garbage Guru

## Kim Kardashian West Mocked For 'Humble' Birthday Party On Private Island

This is the West family's money, and they can do anything they

want with it. Not to mention, the Kardashian family got famous off of *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*, a show that no sane person would describe as "classy." They've got so much strange, needless drama and I don't know why anyone was expecting a proper response from them. Let's be honest, this is how most of us would celebrate if we won the lottery. Anyway, don't pay any more attention to the Kardashian clan, I beg you.

## Iowa Man Who Stole Election Sign Goes On To Steal Newspapers That Reported It

Every day I wake up, and my first thought is always "Please let me out of this *Parks and Rec* simulation that

I have been placed into." Every day, I am greeted with headlines like this one. The flaw with this Iowa man's master plan is that unfortunately, no one reads the paper - it's all on screens these days. However, I would like someone to hire him as the campaign manager for a presidential candidate in 2024; every time his candidate messes up, he'll order a nationwide theft of the New York Times. I wish I could say that his strategy wouldn't work, but I have no faith left in our nation, so I think he'll win by a landslide.

## Bay Village Priest Says Someone Called Police About Homeless Person, But It Was A Statue of Jesus

You know, I don't think this person's assessment is inaccurate. If my understanding of the Bible is correct, Jesus was homeless for 3 years when he went around Israel preaching the Word of the Lord. The intention of the statue was to remind people in the Bay Village area that homelessness is a serious issue, even if they are removed from it. The statue of Jesus was stationed outside of the local church to raise

money to help the homeless; I think this incident may have helped their cause. Though much more could be read into this, we'll just leave it as the funny headline.

## The United States Risks Sanctions From Zimbabwe If Elections Are Not Free And Fair

I am QUAKING in my boots at the possibility of Zimbabwean sanctions on the USA. The stock market has not yet bounced back—the threat of these sanctions has frightened investors far too much! On a more serious note, it's a little sad that a fledgling democracy like Zimbabwe, a country that we slapped with sanctions in 2001 because of the violence following their 2000 elections, is now doing the same thing to us. It doesn't mean much economically, but symbolically, we should take a look at how far our American prestige has fallen in the world. If the Cold War were to reignite, we would not be the standard-bearers of freedom and capitalism that we were. But Zimbabwe is small! Ha!



# Art in Quarantine

Evan O’Suilleabhain, ‘21, who has seen artists flourish.

The current pandemic can feel like a heavy cloud looming over us, an insidious plague from which we must perpetually shield our mouths and noses, but it has also been an unexpected source of inspiration for quite a few artists. Take, for instance, pop star Charli XCX. The British singer began using public Zoom calls in early March to share with her fans the entire creation process of a new album. In a month, Charli wrote and recorded 11 new songs, documenting every step live from her home in Los Angeles. *how i’m feeling now* is an aptly named snapshot of Charli’s thoughts and emotions during this highly uncertain period. The songs are nostalgic for a more joyful pre-coronavirus time, but the mood is generally optimistic. Despite life’s trials, Charli remains positive, as she sings on the song “7 years”: “So hard, the things that we’ve been through / Could’ve fallen but we’ve only grew.”

In this way (and in many others), Charli XCX could not be

more different than the Spanish Romantic painter Francisco Goya. Around 1819, Goya’s home country was still suffering from the effects of the Napoleonic Wars. Goya himself was an old man, nearly deaf, and excruciatingly aware that he was approaching the end of his life. Surrounded on all sides by deterioration and decay, Goya retreated to the ironically-named Deaf Man’s Villa and spent the next few years covering the walls in paintings that range from bleak to downright disturbing. They’re called the Black Paintings, and they’re pretty cool. The most famous of these works, “Saturn Devouring His Son”, compels the viewer to stare into the desperate, horrified eyes of a ragged old man gnawing away at his son’s corpse. The other thirteen paintings are just as cheerful. Like Charli XCX, Goya created his art in total isolation, constructing an incredibly intimate portrait of his mindset. However, the tone could not be any more different. For one thing, Charli deliberately made her album’s creation as collaborative and joyful as possible, wanting her fans to not only consume the final product, but

to be involved in its formation. Conversely, Goya saw his art as a purely solitary venture. Art historian Fred Licht commented that the paintings “are as close to being hermetically private as any that have ever been produced in the history of Western art.” Perhaps this is the fundamental difference between these artists: one retreated from community, and one actively sought it out.

When Canadian musician Grimes locked herself in her dark Montreal apartment, barely eating or sleeping for nine days straight, it wasn’t because of societal or personal turmoil. She just had a strict deadline, and she had procrastinated. In an awe-inspiring feat of cramming, Grimes, fueled by nothing but amphetamines and sheer will, made an album in barely over a week. *Visions* was acclaimed as one of the best albums of 2012 by *NME*, *Rolling Stone*, and *The Guardian*, and it’s safe to say that Grimes’ self-im-



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posed quarantine was a major reason. Everything from the cover art to the lyrics paints a picture of a woman essentially losing her mind, descending into abstraction as she sweetly chants on “Genesis”: “My heart, I never be, I never see, I never know.” *Slant Magazine* describes the album as “an intimate glimpse into the fantasies of its creator,” a spectacle without any artifice.” This is the common thread between Goya, Charli XCX, and Grimes. Whether because of a global pandemic, civil unrest, or simple procrastination, artists in isolation can drop all pretense and truly reflect on their own deepest fears, desires, and fantasies. These could be joyful, terrifying, or confusing, but they’re always authentic.

## “I Never Said”

Ayden Kowalski, ‘21.

Fragile words I never said	Will I believe, or will I shy	You hold your children in your lap
Shadowed worlds inside my head	Away? I cannot say, I cannot say,	Or are we not conceived for that?
I hid it all from you instead.		
	I care.	I’ll think about you one cold night
A single touch I never shared	‘Cause what if you don’t?	When you’re finally out of sight
This thing called love, I never dared	I can’t say I care	I’ll gaze up at the sky and say, “I want you.”
I couldn’t try, I was too scared.	‘Cause what if you won’t?	And when I find my life is right
		I’ll glide through time, and I will bind
Diamond eyes, you’re in my nights.	So, if you gave me a try	The stars into my palm and say, “I love you.”
I try to fly away, but I	Would we end up side by side?	
Can’t seem to leave, I’m paralyzed.	Or would you find that I’m not right?	
And if I see you in the light	A thousand nights might come to pass	

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