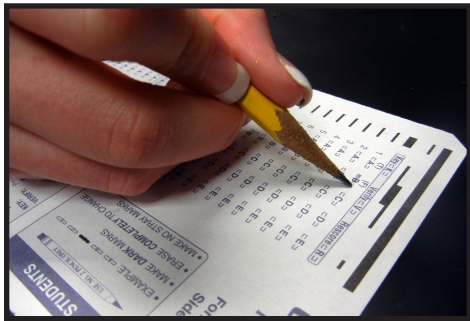


The Cistercian Informer

Volume 52 | Issue 5 | February 2021

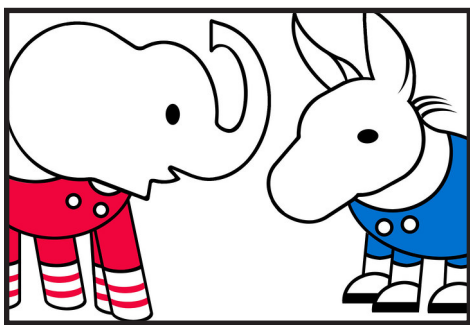
www.CistercianInformer.com

In This Issue



IN NEST: Absurdity or Opportunity

One student's reflection on his personal growth through standardized tests



IN EDITORIALS: The Future of Each Political Party

Read different takes on both parties!



IN NEWS: Capitol Terrorist Attack

An attempt at overthrowing democracy



IN SPORTS: Midseason Soccer Update

How things are going so far



IN MIDDLE SCHOOL: Garbage Guru

Everything is garbage



IN ARTS: Snyder's Justice League Cut

A whole new movie!

Joe Biden's Trade Plan

Coby Scrudder, '21, who hopes it will boost American businesses.

One of the hallmarks of Trump's presidency has been his trade war. Sold to the American people as a way to protect American business and that "China will pay for it," this trade war has ruined countless small businesses and family farms. Due to retaliatory tariffs from China and a decline in the net exports of crops to China, the US Government has had to bail out farmers with over \$50 billion in aid per year, making up almost 40% of farmers' net income. Other small businesses have been hurt as well. Because the tariffs were not applied equally for all goods, the Trump administration chose which American businesses would survive. If the raw material that you used was tariffed but the finished good your company made was not, then your costs raised while foreign competition stayed the same. And because of how Washington works, large corporations were able to lobby their way to an exemption from many of these treaties. Trump's trade war failed, and this leaves President Biden with a fateful decision. He can either end the trade



Photo From Creative Commons

war with China and our allies or he could double down on the tariffs with China, but try to, instead of levying tariffs on our allies, get the help of our allies in this pursuit. This second path seems to be the one that Biden prefers.

The cornerstone of Biden's domestic policy is a complete revitalization of American business, specifically small businesses. This could not come at a better time given the havoc that the pandem-

ic has wrought on many of these family businesses. He wants to encourage manufactures to move their production to America. Biden wants all types of manufacturing to move back, including raw materials and goods that are necessary for an emergency supply line, like medical equipment. So what is Biden doing to encourage this migration?

Continued on Page 4

Looking Back on the Past Academic Year

Santiago Barajas, '24, who encourages us to grow through this experience.

Last March, most of us were looking forward to the end of the semester, hoping for a strong finish and yearning for excited for summer when all of a sudden, a virus swept in from the East and changed our lives completely. On campus, most students were at first beaming with excitement to take a break from the tedious routine of school, captivated by the thrill of a new adventure ahead. The idea of an extended break and getting to learn from home was exciting. But, after the supposed weeks of quarantine turned into months, that joy slowly developed into boredom and despair took root in the hearts of our young men. But the cause of this all, the source of dismay, the author of our misery, the slayer of joy and felicity, is COVID-19.

Despite our dread as we faced a terrifying viral pandemic that had overrun hospitals in every

country it touched, Cistercian kept fighting. Through the combined efforts of the newly formed Medical Board, Nurse Nevitt, Father Paul, and our teachers and staff, the school successfully managed to surpass perhaps the most difficult and unexpected trial in recent history. It is an amusing thought to realize that, while students studied for their own exams, the teachers were also given a test, not a handwritten exam but a technological one that many struggled with (and eventually overcame). That fourth quarter at the end of the last school year was perhaps the most stressful and exasperating time for our teachers. For students, it was another annoying obstacle to overcome to finally reach the freedom of summer. But still we managed, somehow, to finish the year while in distance learning, though becoming weary of it. Most of us were glad to return to campus and were willing to take the precautions necessary to ensure a safe environment in the community.

Continued on Page 2

STAFF

WRITERS

Saish Satyal, Ayden Kowalski, Maxwell Vaughan, Tarun Senthil-Kumar, Santiago Barajas, Luke Herda, Ethan Ramchadani

SECTION EDITORS

Nest: Saish Satyal
News: Mateo Ramirez
Arts: Alex Smith
Sports: Chase Frutos
Middle School: Tarun S.-Kumar
Editorials: Mateo Ramirez

PRODUCTION

Layout: Mateo Ramirez
Digital: Ayden Kowalski
Pictures: Tarun Senthil-Kumar
Faculty Sponsors: Mr. Laurange, Br. Matthew

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Alex Smith

OTHER CONTRIBUTORS

Dominic Andrews, Coby Scrudder, Ankit Lulla, Drake Manos

Absurdity or Opportunity?

Ankit Lulla, '21, who chronicles this personal journey for the benefit of all.

Nowadays, nearly one thousand colleges are test-optional or test-blind for the 2021-2022 admissions cycle and are considering enforcing the moratorium permanently. Beyond the exam's safety precautions, however, many appreciate not being limited by the big, bold number they receive after taking the SAT or ACT. This, however, doesn't reflect the original purpose of the SAT and ACT: to establish a base, a common ground with which college admission committees can compare applicants more effectively.

With a GPA that didn't reflect my true academic caliber, I turned to standardized testing. In retrospect, having wrangled numerous times with these four-hour monstrosities, I can empathize with the widespread conception that standardized testing is simply a reflection of one's ability to take the specified test, but I still believe that it is correlated with academic capability. Truth be told, one of the main reasons that I managed to increase

my ACT score from a 30 to a 36 within the span of a few months despite the incessant amount of work at school and tennis was because of this determined mindset.

Tennis players, and all sportsmen alike, understand the importance of accuracy. When the school's Varsity tennis team practices serves at cone targets across the net, the intent is to improve your ability to control the ball, gradually building upon your confidence and skill as an athlete with each target hit; bounce the ball a few times to relax, swiftly raise your non-dominant arm, and pounce on the hovering ball at its apex. I often found myself attacking math problems and delving deeper into grammatical, structural, and creative questions, counting each correct answer I bubbled—just as we did with each cone knocked down—to track my progress. A practice test wasn't a tedious waste of time as much as it became the satisfying forearm pronation of an outstretched arm mid-serve, enhancing my mind's muscle memory before the next test, like training for a tennis match.

Thus, began my approach

to every aspect of the tests as an athlete rather than a student; to perfect a crisp forehand in tennis, it requires hours of work day-in and day-out—what Malcom Gladwell deemed “the ten-thousand hour rule”. This is ultimately what I attribute to attaining the score that I sought: one section each day, seven days a week, for eight weeks straight. I timed every practice test, assignment, and essay, maximizing my productivity. While I still had the occasional bout of downtime, it was never at the expense of practice.

When coronavirus struck, it had seemingly obliterated any hope of testing in the vicinity and many of my peers had resorted to submitting their applications having clicked the “test-optional” bubble on the Common app. Yet, the tennis player within me viewed testing locations from an athlete's perspective: why not travel, as I would for sectionals or nationals, to take the

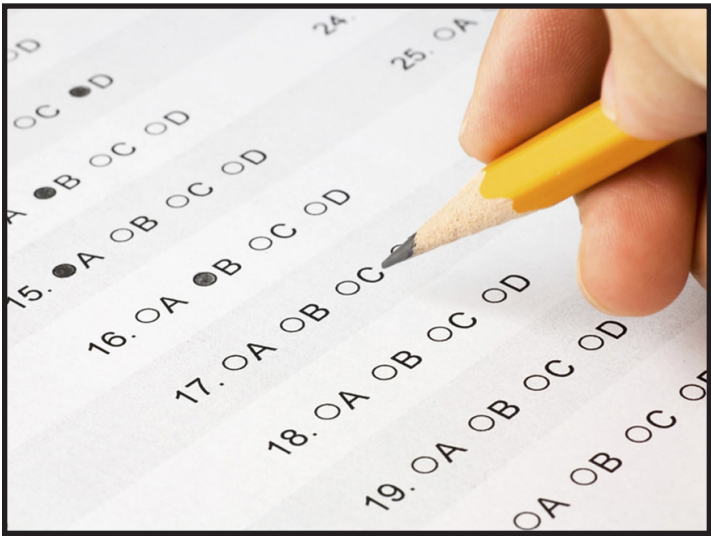


Photo From Creative Commons

test in a relatively stable town? So a three-hour drive to Texarkana High School, a hotel stay in the area, and some months later, I entered Senior year with a score I was much happier with.

Most, if not all, of those reading this article, will (or have) at some point struggle through the complex college application process, and it's my belief that such tests give those like me a second chance at propounding their academic potential. Whether the future involves standardized testing at all, however, is beside the point, and it's that characteristic, Cistercian discipline and sincere approach to learning that promotes growth as a test-taker, student, athlete, brother, and potential future husband.



Photo From Cistercian

Though the experience of masks and in-class cameras may have been unsettling at first, when the doors to return to campus were finally opened, most of us were glad to no longer have to stare at a computer screen all day. Some people were missing in the classroom, onlookers from ‘distance learning land’ (as Mr. Mehen would say), those present at school could finally see the faces of their friends again—well, half of their face anyway. Of course, hand sanitizer now had to be used regularly and lunch was to be eaten outside, but these precautions gave us the privilege to remain on campus and brought the new semester the closest to what we had considered normal before this pandemic. I did not feel dejected nor did I

despair due to the COVID restrictions imposed by the school, which I think were necessary for us to actually learn, and I think the school succeeded in their plan to safely return us to campus and continue our studies as normally as they could.

Of course, the school could not satisfy everyone with every decision that was made. Many students were extremely disappointed with the cancellation of fall sports and the subsequent cancellation of the after-parties, a staple of Friday nights for many Cistercian high schoolers. Any gatherings that may have spread COVID—afterparties, Homecoming, movie nights, a proper freshman baptism, and a majority of the electives—were all cancelled. Practices in this winter season have all looked different and extra curriculars have been forced to change as well. There seemed to be no end and many students began to get angry at the administration for taking away

Looking Back (Cont'd)

their activities. But, the dawn of the vaccines mark a new hope for the end of this horrific fright. The monks over 65 in the monastery have already been able to get their vaccinations. When we return to our regular schedules, we will better enjoy the time spent with our friends, and no longer take these little things for granted but rather relish them in the new times and grow in our relationships with those closest to us.

It is easy to focus on all the bad things that the pandemic brought (and there's a lot of them), but that does not mean that our school lives were completely ruined. Although we could not have fall sports, winter sports remained in place. We were privileged with the opportunity to return to campus. The upper school play declared that the show must go on, and the freshmen were given their social with Ursuline. Cistercian has provided far more than most other schools in the nation have been able to. Even online school has its advantages—waking up late and not having to wear a full uniform are benefits that cannot be overlooked. We must make sure not to be carried away

by the depressing thoughts brought by the virus but focus on our good experiences during the pandemic, something we'll be able to remember for the rest of our lives.

Though last year did not go at all as anyone would have expected, it helped us grow in patience, courage, and wisdom. Despite its imperfections, this last semester was an experience that we will never forget, both the good and the bad alike. We can't decide what befalls us, but we can decide how to react to it, and that is what makes us grow in character. Luckily for us, the end is in sight. This source of dismay, author of misery, slayer of joy and felicity, COVID will soon be brought low by the great minds of our time.

The Republicans' Future

Dominic Andrews, '21, who thinks the time for a decision has come.

With the inauguration of President Biden and both chambers of congress under Democratic control, the future of the Republican Party has been thrown into question. Which way will the Republicans go? Will they reject Trump and make a return to their pre-Trump self, or embrace Trump as the future of the party?

Trump was the result of a broken political system. As time passed, the Republican Party began to appear more elitist and uninterested in helping the average American. While this point is debatable, Trump still portrayed himself as the savior for these Americans who had been left to fend for themselves. Trump was a quintessential populist and used this support to propel himself to the presidency, and his methods have been arguably successful. The rising number of anti-establishment Republicans has certainly been an indicator of Trump's continued popularity. Another metric is that, in this past

election, Trump did better with Hispanics and Blacks than he did in 2016. In an increasingly diverse America, it is paramount for Republicans to gain support from these reliably Democratic voting blocs.

Despite all these positives, Trump is still Trump. Trump peddles conspiracy theories, is unabashedly rude, does not care for politeness, and is repugnant to many. Even though he got the second most votes ever, he still lost by over 7 million votes. He is decidedly anti-science and can never admit that he was wrong. Thus, the Republican Party is now in a difficult position: choose Trump, or embrace the neo-liberal views of the old Republican Party.

What was this old party? Marked by free markets and (supposedly) limited government, including low taxes and low spending, this Republican Party sought to ally itself with European nations and expand the influence of the United States. Although Trump has not broken ties with Europe or stopped the wars in the Middle East, he has taken steps in that direction. These views of globalism and intervention-

ism have certainly alienated many segments of the population. The hands-off approach has not and cannot persuade voters. The wars in the Middle East have certainly been unpopular with isolationists who want the government to do more for them. Trump has certainly appealed to this demographic. Another demographic that Republicans have not had, but Trump brought along, were the protectionists: putting American jobs, and American citizens, before any others. Strict immigration policy and protectionist trade deals have brought many supporters, but at the same time have made some Republican voting blocs, such as suburbanites, uncomfortable. As the party embraces Trump, they are less concerned about spending and helping out other countries and more concerned about the growing demographic and cultural shifts within the country.

The Republican Party is

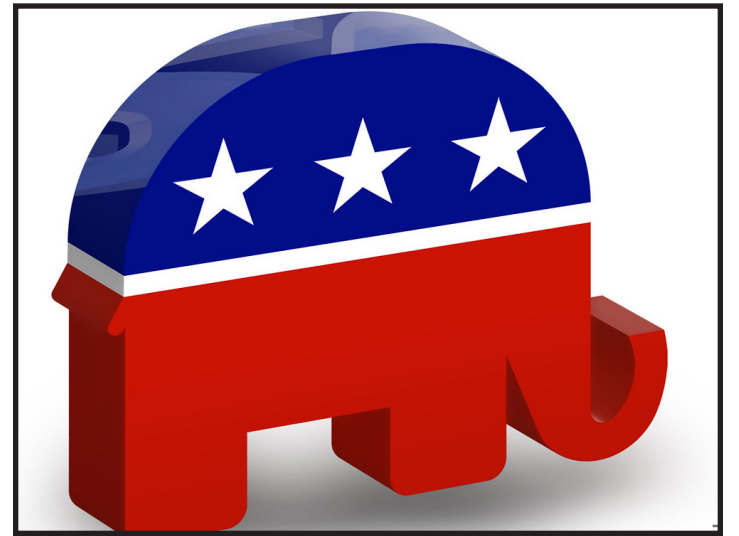


Photo From Creative Commons

now stuck in a fork in the road. Can Trump's success be replicated without him? Is Trumpism a viable way to build a coalition? Is any short term success marred by decades of declining support? I believe that Trump is not the way forward. In an increasingly progressive period, the Republican Party must swing back to the middle. But even this is dangerous and uncertain. Is the old Republicanism even viable anymore? Or is it too out of touch to ever win again? Either path will require great retrospection within the party. Trumpism is a dangerous political movement; it is a double edged sword that can either help or hurt Republicans' chances in the future.

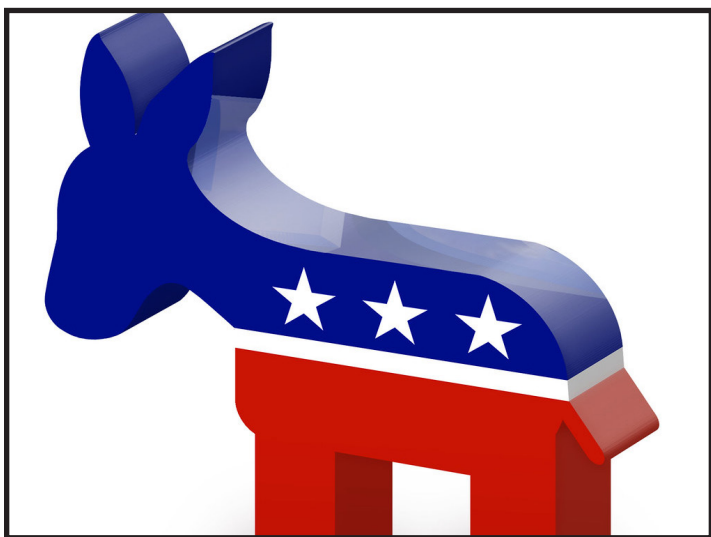


Photo From Creative Commons

Saish Satyal, '21, who thinks things aren't as great as they may seem.

Given the recent inaugurations of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, Democrats across the country are feeling ecstatic. This is the first time in over six years that they've controlled the executive and legislative branches. On Biden's first day, he stopped construction of the border wall, undid Trump's "Muslim Ban", and rejoined the Paris Accords. Not only that, he also plans on submitting an immigration reform bill to Congress that reportedly surprised activists by how progressive it was (for Biden's administration, anyway). These recent victories, along with the fractures in the GOP

and 2024.

In order to gauge the party's future, we need to go back to the first week of November. For all intents and purposes, Democrats lost that election. They lost the state legislatures, they lost seats in the House, and they didn't get a Senate majority. Americans voted for Biden and then chose Republican legislators to go to Congress (a great way to get rid of Washington's partisan gridlock). Centrist Democrats refused to admit that they should've been more aggressive in their ad campaigns and progressives refused to admit that running further left candidates in places like West Virginia wouldn't help their image at the moment. One of the main reasons that the Dems aren't

The Democrats' Future

between the old guard and the Trump loyalists, must have Democrats riding on an unbelievable high. However, if they don't assess their flaws, they're going to implode in 2022

in shambles right now is Stacey Abrams and her Herculean voter organization efforts in Georgia. The party's nationwide strategy failed and they relied on Abrams to work a miracle. That strategy won't work in the future.

The Democratic Party can't pack any federal courts, they have no hope of eliminating the filibuster, and their Senate "majority" is only classified as such because Joe Manchin, a pro-life, pro-fossil fuel, anti-\$2k stimulus senator, identifies as a Democrat. The party's opponent in the Senate is still Mitch McConnell, a man who said "You seem to be under the mistaken impression that I care" to Joe Biden attempting to persuade him of the merits of a certain bill he wanted passed. He's fantastic at being obstructionist, and with a 50 seat "minority", he's going to pummel Chuck Schumer into the ground. The only thing going for Democrats is the insurrection (strangely enough) and the fact that the GOP has to figure out how to act in the post-Trump era, especially after many of its young members called it "the Party of Trump" and after more than a hundred members

attempted to overturn a legitimate election.

Unless Democrats get over the useless idea that the 2020 GOP is the same as the 1990 GOP, they're going to get beat on every field they can imagine. They underestimated the ruthlessness of the GOP in the Obama administration and were unable to appoint federal judges, failed to pass any gun control measures, and they even came close to getting the ACA repealed. At this point, the two parties aren't even playing the same game anymore. Watching the Democratic Party attempt to play politics is like watching 14-year-olds playing in the NBA. Unless they can fight off the conservative propaganda machines that talk about "death panels" and deem government action to be socialist, create a grassroots voter organization effort, and overcome the cynicism and suspicion that's taken hold of most of this nation, they're going to lose every single election going forward. Unless they get a grip and start playing the same game as the GOP, the future of the Democratic Party could be disastrous.

Biden's Trade Plan (Cont'd)

His first major step is to encourage the government to buy American made goods. Under Trump, the Department of Defense has increased their spending on foreign goods. While the government is supposed to buy American, there are countless loopholes to get around this. Biden wants to close these loopholes and invest over \$400 billion in buying American made goods. This ground level investment will allow many businesses to get government contracts that they may not have been able to get before because of the higher costs of manufacturing in America. Through this investment, Biden will support businesses who allow their workers to unionize, have good benefits, and pay their employees high wages.

Another part of Biden's policy is to stop Chinese intellectual property theft. This is one area where Biden is very clear that he supports tariffs. He wants to make sure that American innovation stays in America and is not stolen. In order to spur on more innovation, Biden proposes investing \$300 billion into private American companies researching artificial intelli-

gence, medical breakthroughs, and countless other things. By investing this money, Biden hopes to keep American innovation at the top of the world and to make jobs in the process.

Another part of Biden's domestic economic plan is his tax bill. Biden has criticized Trump constantly for what Biden calls "The Trump Billionaire Tax Cut". This tax bill allowed companies to move their production offshore and pay less in tax for doing so than if goods were produced in America. This is a problem that Biden wants to solve with his Offshoring Tax Penalty. Any American company that makes goods overseas and sells them back into American will have to pay a 10% surtax on top of Biden's proposed 28% corporate tax rate for a total of 30.8%. While this may not sound like a large difference, taking an extra 2.8% out of companies' bottom lines should give them a monetary reason to stay in America, even with the higher wages in America. However, this may not be enough. Biden is also pushing for a \$15/hour minimum wage and if this happens, the cost of labor in the US

may skyrocket and will be yet another hurdle that American manufacturing has to overcome.

Finally, Biden wants to crack down on the labelling of items as "Made in America". He wants tighter regulation on this so that companies will be encouraged to move more of their supply line to America. Currently, only 51% of the value of the product has to be made in America for a product to be labeled as such. Biden wants to raise the percentage to attain this badge of honor. He wants to make sure that "Made in America" means what it says and is not just a marketing point.

Coming from Trump's trade policy, it seems that Biden can only make things better. While Trump talked a lot about moving business to America, nothing was really done, and his trade war instead stifled American business. Many of the great achievements that Trump claims, like the Foxconn factory



Photo From Creative Commons

built in Wisconsin, have already failed. Biden wants to lift American business up from this decline. He wants to invest hundreds of billions into American businesses and American jobs. He wants to work with our allies on future trade deals with China so that American business will grow from this. He wants to make sure that American businesses provide good and safe jobs, jobs that have unions, high wages, and benefits. These are lofty goals, and the investment cost is high. But this change could not come at a better time as the fate of many American businesses is up in the air because of the pandemic and a collapse of small business could have widespread economic tremors.



Photo From Creative Commons

Ethan Ramchandani, '21, who wants things to be calmer now.

On January 6th, 2021, the U.S. Capitol was attacked by a number of domestic terrorists who bought into Donald Trump's cult of personality. These terrorists were under the false assumption that the outcome of the recent elections was fraudulent, and these terrorists stormed the building while there was a joint session of Congress concerning counting electoral votes. These terrorists surrounded the building and overwhelmed the flimsy police force set up to prevent it. Amazingly, even pipe bombs were found on site. Five people were killed in the course of the attack:

er.

It is no surprise that this attack occurred—Donald Trump and Donald Trump Jr. have been calling for total war and echoing fictitious claims that the election was fraudulent. This struck a nerve with a few (thousand) domestic terrorists, and they took it upon themselves to make it right. One such terrorist, named Ron Watkins, took to his platform and implored Donald Trump to follow the example of Julius Caesar. In particular, he references the crossing of the Rubicon river when Caesar took advantage of military loyalty and seized the Republic for his own. Thus, #CrossTheRubicon was born. The flames were further stoked when the former national security advisor

Capitol Terrorist Attack

four terrorists and one police officer. Of these people, one terrorist was shot trying to enter the Capitol and the police officer died after being bludgeoned with a fire extinguish-

Michael Flynn suggested Trump use the military via martial law to rerun the election. However, the smoking gun comes from the tweet from ex-President Trump stating that his supporters should protest on January 6th while ballots are being counted.

Prior to the Capitol attack, 'patriot' caravans transported terrorists from around the country to D.C. The terrorists came from many groups, including but not limited to, the Proud Boys, the Three Percenters, the Oath Keepers, other far right militant groups, and some members of the actual police.

As the election result began to sink in, many Republicans began to recognize President-Elect Biden's just victory. Among the Republicans recognizing Biden's victory is former Vice President Mike Pence. This made the terrorists extremely angry. At the Capitol attack, the terrorists erected a guillotine and called for Pence's execution. The terrorists also turned on the police who fought to keep them out of the Capitol, calling into question the true intentions behind the commonly heard expression "blue lives matter" by some of

these people.

Trump told the terrorists over *Twitter* that he loved them and that they should go home. Unsurprisingly, this did not work very well in quelling the violence.

The aftermath of the attack saw Democrats push Mike Pence to use the 25th amendment to boot Trump from office. After voting went in Trump's favor, an impeachment trial was initiated in which ten Republicans voted in favor of impeaching Trump, making it the most bipartisan impeachment in history. In addition to showing sympathy for a terrorist attack, Trump is also the first president to be impeached twice. Trump was also banned from the following: *Twitter*, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *Spotify*, *Pinterest*, *YouTube*, *Twitch*, *TikTok*, and *Shopify* (for his merch).

In the wake of January 6th, we are seeing the dangers that are attached to the cult of personality that Trump has created. His base of supporters live in their own pocket universe, made of alternative facts where Trump is everything and his actions and words are excusable.

Midseason Soccer Update

Maxwell Vaughan, '21, who is an undefeated champion.

The Hawks kicked off their season by traveling out to Argyle to take on Liberty Christian. Liberty proved to be no match for the Hawks, as the game ended with a score of 10-0. I could even count the number of times that Liberty had the ball outside of their own half on one hand. In their next game the Hawks took on HSAA, an opponent who has given them trouble in the past. This year, nothing changed. The Angels, with their multiple skilled players, looked to be a formidable opponent. Luckily, superstar striker Ben Woods ('21) scored a brace, leading the team to a massive 3-0 victory. Next, the Hawks took on McKinney Christian in the fortress that is Hawk Field. With the full support of their loyal fans, the boys were able to take down McKinney Christian with a score of 9-0. Unfortunately, tragedy struck the Hawks. Multiple members of the squad were out due to COVID protocol, resulting in a reduced team. Despite this, the boys marched on, ready to take

down their opponent. The game was sloppy, and many chances were missed. Still, the Hawks emerged victorious after eighty minutes of domination, winning 3-0, thanks to two goals from Chase Frutos ('21) and a penalty kick from Jakob Quarles ('22).

After the Bishop Dunne game, the boys began to settle for a nice, relaxing Christmas break. Coach Walsh, however, had different plans. He drilled his players, making sure they would be fit and ready for conference play. Over the break, the Hawks went to Cristo Rey for their final non-conference game. Cristo Rey is typically a strong team; it took an excellent performance for the boys to claim a 2-1 win against them two years ago. This year, however, it seems their program took a serious down turn, as the Hawks won effortlessly 8-0, with three of the goals coming from super-sub Nonso Unini ('23). The team then spent the rest of the break eagerly awaiting their first conference matchup against Trinity Valley. Last Friday, the Trojans made the trek all the way to Irving to fight it out on the banks of the mighty Trinity

River. The Hawks made easy work of Trinity Valley, dominating in a 7-0 win. In fact, Trinity Valley hardly challenged goalkeeper Devon Comstock ('22). In their second conference game, the boys took on the Oakridge Owls. The Cistercian and Oakridge soccer teams have a history together, as a game a couple years ago between the two turned into a brawl (three red cards for Oakridge, none for Cistercian). But, Oakridge clearly did not have as much fight in them this year as they did two years ago. The Hawks controlled all eighty minutes of the game, earning another 7-0 victory. At the time of writing, the soccer team has outscored their opponents 47-0 in seven games. I think it is fair to say that the Hawks have not been truly challenged. Hopefully, they get that challenge in the coming weeks in SPC play.

After a big win over undefeated Casady, the Hawks had one final test against rivals St. Mark's. A



Photo By John Rehagen

win meant that Cistercian was SPC North Zone Champions. It was a cold Tuesday night, and the game started off in our favor. An early goal from Diego Prida ('23) meant that the Lions were on their heels. Just after halftime, Masaki Fracaroli ('22) scored off a corner kick to make the game 2-0. The Hawk defense stayed strong for the rest of the game, and Cistercian emerged victorious, 2-1. After this historic win, I can proudly say that we are 2021 SPC North Zone Champions. I would like to finish this off giving a shout out to my fellow seniors Chase Frutos, Zain Dabbous, Ben Woods, Andrew Farhat, JB Hudnall, and Joseph Smith. Thanks to our hard work and leadership, we brought a championship back to Cistercian.



Photo From Creative Commons

Tarun Senthil-Kumar, '23, who analyzes the role of NBA super teams.

With James Harden's recent trade, the Brooklyn Nets have been labeled the NBA's next super team, a team consisting of three or more stars acquired through free agency and trades. This definition excludes squads like the 2000s Spurs, whose stars were all drafted, and identifies squads like the '17-'19 Warriors, who signed Kevin Durant after their historic season. The Nets, a team formed by collusion via Durant and Kyrie Irving's shady joint free agency as well as Harden's forced trade, are certainly a super team. Looking back, there have been nine NBA super teams: '68-'72 Lakers,

this past decade due to super teams. Kevin Durant seems guilty of this as he joined a 73-9 team, but looking deeper, the true culprit had already struck. In 2014, the NBA announced a nine-year \$24 billion TV deal with ESPN. A portion of this revenue was to be gradually allocated to salary caps, however, LeBron James, the Players Union VP, ensured that the money was allocated all at once causing a \$20 million salary cap spike. This gifted every team a tax-free bill to create "equal opportunity," but it allowed the best teams to add even more talent, upsetting league parity all thanks to LeBron. Though they seem unfair, super teams are good for the NBA so long as there is no clear champion. For example, the Miami Big 3, who boosted the NBA

A New NBA Super Team?

'96-'99 Rockets, '04 Lakers, '07-'12 Celtics, '10-'14 Heat, '13 Lakers, '14 Nets, '15-'17 Cavs, and '17-'19 Warriors. Fans complain about a "lack of competition"

brand, still lost to small-market Dallas in the Finals, but the '17-'19 Warriors, who were so unbeatable that ratings plummeted, made it impossible for anyone else to win. The NBA is a unique league. There are less than 10 superstars, meaning that every small market cannot be competitive, whereas in the NFL, teams like Kansas City and Seattle contend regularly. Frankly, it is impossible to create "equal opportunity" for teams like Indiana in free agency, and small markets will always be forced to build through the draft or trades.

Trade Breakdown

Brooklyn Nets get:

James Harden
One 2nd-round draft pick
Houston Rockets get:

Victor Oladipo
Dante Exum
Rodions Kurucs
Four 1st-round draft picks
Four 1st-round pick swaps

Indiana Pacers get:

Caris LeVert (from Brooklyn)
One 2nd-round draft pick
Cleveland Cavaliers get:
Jarrett Allen
Taurean Prince

This four-team trade marks

a momentous event in NBA history. The NBA has seen many super teams, but none quite as unprecedented as these Nets. The offensive firepower this team possesses is spectacular, and under the guidance of two-time MVP Coach Steve Nash and revolutionary-minded Assistant Coach Mike D'Antoni, Brooklyn could score 150 points every game. As great as this sounds, there is only one ball to go around. Durant developed into a great off-ball player in Golden State, but Kyrie and Harden are primarily isolation scorers. Nash can use this to his advantage by featuring three-point specialist Joe Harris, the most important player to Brooklyn. The Nets' defense, however, will be a major problem. With Spencer Dinwiddie's ACL injury, the Nets' depth poses another weakness. Brooklyn's expectations are championship or bust, and if this super team implodes, they have no future. In conclusion, due to manipulation of the salary cap, the Brooklyn Nets, featuring Kevin Durant, Kyrie Irving, and James Harden, are the latest in a line of inevitable super teams.

Spider-Man 3: Dec. 2021

Drake Manos, '26, who has many predictions for this upcoming film.

Spider-Man, what can I say? The friendly neighborhood Spider-Man has become a household name. I have loved the character ever since I watched the versions of the character portrayed by Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield. When I first saw him in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU), I was filled with joy, as one of my favorite characters was brought to life in the largest superhero franchise yet. However, there are a few issues that need to be resolved before the third installment's release in December 2021.

The first issue that must be addressed is for Tom Holland to appear as Peter Parker/Spider-Man on the run in his own sequel! In the mid-credits scene of *Spider-Man: Far From Home*, J. Jonah Jameson revealed the identity of Spider-Man to the world, and showed a video that seemed like he killed Mysterio, who was thought by the public to be a hero. The reveal excited me because it made me think they would

use my favorite *Spider-Man* villain, Kraven the Hunter, in an actual film. If you do not know about the comic book history of Kraven, he is a professional hunter who hosted his own television show in Africa where he killed animals. There have been different versions of his origin, but they all lead to him hunting down Spider-Man. However, *Sony Pictures* has already confirmed Jamie Foxx's Electro and Alfred Molina's Doctor Octopus to return to the big screen. However, they should only appear as cameos because the plot will already be crowded with the weight of Spider-Man's identity reveal. *Sony* also confirmed the appearance of Benedict Cumberbatch's Doctor Strange, which would make sense because he could turn back time to make sure Spider-Man's identity is not revealed, but unfortunately *Sony* confirmed that he will be a mentor to Peter Parker which hinders his character arc. Peter is not a kid anymore, so this mentorship would be inappropriate. There are rumors that the movie will be a *Spider-Verse* film with Garfield and Maguire returning as their respective versions of Spider-Man. I am fine with them

returning as long as they are cameos for a set up of the next film or *Doctor Strange 2*.

The second issue to address is that Peter's friends should turn on him. Ned, Peter's best friend, is the funniest character in these movies. In the comics, Ned becomes the Hobgoblin which could make sense in this film, since he could find himself in trouble due to Peter's reveal. Flash should be the villain of this film and be revealed as an Osborn. He could hire Kraven to hunt down Spider-Man. Kraven is known for being a manipulative person in the comics so he could manipulate Ned and convince him to become the Hobgoblin. One argument that helps this speculation is that Jacob Batalon, who plays Ned, lost weight for this film.

The final thing to be addressed is for Peter to become more of a leader. We all (hopefully) have seen *Avengers: Endgame* and witnessed Iron Man and Black Widow



Photo From Creative Commons

die, Captain America retire, Thor leave with the Guardians, and Hulk turn into Professor Hulk. The lead characters now are Black Panther, Spider-Man, Doctor Strange, the Scarlet Witch, Falcon, and the Winter Soldier. So, I think if Spider-Man becomes a leader in this film and steps into his own, he would be perfect for leading a new generation of Avengers with Shuri as the Black Panther, Ms. Marvel, Ironheart, and maybe Miles Morales as another Spider-Man.

All of these additions to *Spider-Man 3* would make this movie a great film and set up further great films in the future of the MCU. I look forward to seeing it this December.



Photo From Creative Commons

'I got caught up in the moment': Man Hanging From Senate Balcony Asks For Forgiveness

This may be an unpopular opinion, but I think this guy should be forgiven. I mean, I don't know about anyone else, but there have been multiple times when I also got "caught up in the moment," traveled to Washington D.C., violently stormed the Capitol building, and hung off the Senate balcony in an effort to make sure the guy that lost the election would still be president. Honestly, I get it.

Scientists Have Found Some Truly Ancient Ice, But Now They Want Ice That's Even Older

Garbage Guru

What's with scientists and never being satisfied with the ice they've already got? The scientists in this article have already found ice that's 2.6 million years

old, and apparently, they want ice that's even older. I'm a little suspicious of these scientists and their ice that they refuse to share with the rest of us. They claim that they want to study this ice in an effort to see what the air was like on Earth millions of years ago, so they can't just share it with the rest of us. I think it's just propaganda. There's no good reason for the top 1% of scientists to own 100% of Antarctic ice.

Biden's Dog Major Will Get His Own "Indoguration" As White House's First Rescue Pup

This headline isn't garbage, but it's certainly strange. Any and all dogs across the country were "invited to join," and the Biden campaign

allowed for puppies to be nominated for positions in Major's Cabinet, with the most notable one being, "Secretary of Rescue Dogs." There was a \$10 fee to join the virtual Indoguration, with all proceeds going to the Delaware Humane Association, the shelter that Major was adopted from.

Former Israeli Space Head Says Aliens Are Real And A Galactic Federation Exists

Apparently, there's also an underground base on Mars to which we've sent American astronauts and representatives from around the world. Professor Haim Eshed claims that the aliens are peaceful (thank goodness). They just want to understand humanity and the fabric of the universe. The professor also claims that Donald Trump KNEW about the aliens and was asked not to reveal this information because it would cause mass hysteria. Of course, as we all know, our former president is fantastic at calming people down and making sure they don't do irrational things. While NASA has said that they haven't found any extrater-

restrial life yet, the Pentagon actually declined to comment when asked about Professor Eshed's claims. If he's right, we're all going to have to deal with the frustration of alien discriminators who are going to claim that human rights don't apply to aliens since aliens aren't human.

'Apocalyptic' Sea Foam Overwhelms Australian Beaches, Bringing Forth Deadly Sea Snakes, 'Half A Cow'

Australia seems to be the place Mother Nature decided to dump all of the creatures she made that were far too dangerous for inhabited lands. They've got giant spiders, all ten of the most venomous snakes in the world, kangaroos, etc. Not to mention, the poor continent is forced to deal with wildfires almost every year. Now, sea storms have brought forth sea foam so thick that it can hide half a cow, a bunch of trees, and a ton of venomous snakes. There are a lot of things that Americans (rightfully) complain about, but we should be thankful that we're not living in Mother Nature's sadistic playground.

Snyder's Justice League Cut

Luke Herda, '23 who is excited for this new director's cut.

I am sure that many of you have forgotten about the 2017 film *Justice League*. Meant to be DC's answer to *Marvel's* successful *Avengers* series, the movie is known to have had a troubled production that resulted in a confusing end-product complete with out-of-place jokes, unfinished computer-generated imagery, distracting cinematography, an underwhelming score, and a radically different, happier tone compared to the film's predecessors, which were *Man of Steel* and *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*.

One of the major reasons why these issues occurred is the fact that the director, Zack Snyder, stepped down due to a family tragedy. As a result, the studio *Warner Bros.* replaced him with Joss Whedon, known for directing *The Avengers* (2012) and *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (2015). The studio commanded Whedon and the rest of the team to make many changes to the film which resulted in the aforementioned issues and in a short runtime

of two hours. When the film was released in November 2017, fans' responses were mixed, to say the least, and *Justice League* was considered to be a box office disappointment.

Fans of Snyder and his unique take on the DC universe found themselves upset. However, hope sparked within the fandom. Snyder repeatedly teased through social media that much footage of his original cut had survived. Reported differences between Snyder's original vision and the theatrical release were numerous. It was also said that the rumored "Snyder Cut" ran much longer, lasting about three and a half hours. These reports drove many on social media to campaign for the release of this fabled cut with the hashtag "#releasethesnydercut."

This movement grew among fans of Snyder and DC to such an extent that people even reserved billboards at Times Square and around the San Diego area with the hashtag, pleading *Warner Bros.* to release the cut. Even cast members campaigned on social media for the release, such as Ben Affleck, Gal Gadot, and Jason Momoa, who

played Batman, Wonder Woman, and Aquaman in the film, respectively. The fame of the movement culminated on the second anniversary of the film's release in November 2019, when #releasethesnydercut trended worldwide on social media.

Finally, in May 2020, Snyder officially announced that his cut of the film, titled *Zack Snyder's Justice League*, would be released in 2021 on the streaming service *HBO Max*. Fans, including me, received the news joyously. A trailer for the cut, which helped showcase how different this version of *Justice League* was to the original, was released in August 2020 to favorable reception among fans. Snyder additionally revealed that the cut would be released as a four-part miniseries of at least 214 minutes in length in March 2021, with one final trailer yet to be released as of the writing of this article. Additionally, the cut will later be released as one long film and will



Photo From Creative Commons

also be released in black and white.

Overall, this entire sequence of events is unprecedented. Never before have we seen a fandom campaign with such passion to receive a radically different version of a piece of media. As a fan of Zack Snyder's films and DC, I cannot wait to experience Snyder's cut of *Justice League*. I, like many others, did not necessarily like the theatrical cut and wished to see Snyder's original vision of the film. I have found myself overjoyed that one of my favorite directors could finally tell his version of the story that he and many others worked together to bring to life, and I look forward to next month when we finally get to experience what we have waited many years to see.



Photo From Creative Commons

Ayden Kowalski, '21, who was theatrically incinerated by martians.

Theater was one of the first casualties of the coronavirus crisis at Cistercian, with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being canceled before the curtains could ever open. The pandemic has made it impossible to stage a traditional production, as actors and audience members need to maintain social distancing. This does not mean, however, that theater must lie dormant until the virus is defeated. For its fall production, Ursuline Academy of Dallas brought the show out to the audience, broadcasting two plays, *War of the Worlds* and *The Radio Play Disaster*, online.

on the radio, except the program is interrupted by the invasion of a Martian fleet decimating the East Coast. According to popular myth, the show was entirely convincing to its original 1939 audience, forcing its narrator Orson Welles to assure the listeners after it concluded that the United States had not been ravaged by an alien attack. *The Radio Play Disaster*, meanwhile, is a spoof on the former play, with the egotistic director seeking to boost his program's ratings by chronicling a fake invasion from Venus. Unfortunately for him, this interplanetary tragedy does not succeed in tricking its audience, instead collapsing into complete chaos. Since *War of the Worlds* was written for live broadcasting, and *The Radio Play Disaster* is a par-

The Show Can Go On!

One of the reasons the production was possible is that both of these shows are uniquely suited for streaming. *War of the Worlds* is a radio play designed to mimic a normal show

ody of it, the plays were adapted for online streaming (with the former presented as solely audio).

One may wonder how the cast and the crew of this production could rehearse and perform during the pandemic. Initially, rehearsals were held virtually before later moving to the Ursuline theater, where participants came in masks and stayed apart from each other. The casts of the two plays worked separately whenever possible, though some actors, such as Cistercian's Horton Richard ('21), had roles in both. Actors were spaced out on stage, and until the final dress rehearsal and the actual shows, all onstage performances were given in masks. While there was an audience physically present for each run, all were extremely small, with people spread throughout the theater. Because of the cast, crew, and audiences' adherence to safety protocols, the production was possible.

Even though the production was very different from a typical show, it still offered the challenge and connection that makes theater so special for its participants. As an actor in *War of the Worlds*, I had

to communicate my whole character through my voice, which was a new experience for me in theater. I especially enjoyed crafting my performance as the narrator Orson Welles, drawing from both the original audio I had heard from the 1939 broadcast and the haunting, enigmatic narrator of *The Twilight Zone* to create a voice that fit the role. My favorite part of the experience, however, was simply spending time with the rest of the cast and crew. The community of theater is what draws me to participate, and even COVID-19 cannot conquer the special power theater has to bring people together.

Ursuline's successful fall production is proof that theater does not have to wait until the pandemic subsides. Ursuline has already begun to rehearse its spring musical *Into the Woods*, which will be performed outside, and the front steps of Cistercian will soon become the stage for *Twelfth Night*. Theater will certainly be different for some time to come, but with the ingenuity of its creators, it can continue in the face of the coronavirus. The show can go on!