

A Quarter in Review



Heisman Trophy winner quarterback Fernando Mendoza of Indiana with The Heisman Memorial Trophy during a news conference at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025, in New York. (Adam Hunger/Getty Images/TNS)

Marist Youth: Sparking Faith through Community

By Ale Menendez

Every Tuesday night from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the L Building dining hall, students gather for Marist Youth with the help of some Marist brothers in order to fellowship, pray, and have fun together while getting closer to God.

What is Marist Youth?

The gathering usually starts off with a quick icebreaker to get students more comfortable and acquainted with each other. Next, students are prompted to pray through activities such as "silent prayer," a unique type of prayer where

students sit quietly with their eyes closed in worship with God.

"For me, silent prayer genuinely feels like the only time that I can quiet my mind and that helps me get closer to God. It's a very unique way of praying and I'm so glad that I got introduced to it," says Columbus senior Nicholas Haddad.

Following this, a student from the Marist Youth staff gives a "talk" that

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Thousands of Miles for Columbus Football

By Kingston Rust

On most Friday nights, the spotlight gravitates toward the players who score touchdowns or make game-changing catches. But sophomore offensive lineman La Swalla-vi, better known around campus as "Deuce," is building his reputation far from the glamour that typically defines high school football. For him, the real work happens long before the stands fill and the lights turn on.

Deuce has a clear vision of why he grinds the way he does.

"I picture myself being in the NFL, giving back to my family, retiring my parents, and letting them live a carefree life," he says.

That goal fuels his approach to every rep, and coaches notice it. They call him a "big baby" in the sense that he is still growing into his frame, but the excitement they see in him and the potential is unmistakable. Whether it is early-morning drills or extra conditioning after practice, Deuce commits himself to the kind of effort most people will never witness.

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Dr. Phil Currie: The Dinosaur Champion

By JP Pina

For 150 million years, planet Earth was ruled by an awe-inspiring group of special reptiles: dinosaurs. Over the course of their reign, they not only shared the planet with many long-gone creatures like strange crocodile-relatives and flying and marine reptiles, but they also died alongside them. 66 million years after their reign ended, humanity began to harvest the rich and macabre crop of this ancient world, with a few men and women becoming as famous as the

dragons they uncovered.

When I went to Alberta, Canada, I got to meet one such scientist: Dr. Philip J. Currie. And while he may not have been the first person to describe a dinosaur (that title goes to Gideon Mantell who named Megalosaurus in 1827), his work has championed the creatures that came before in ways that would revolutionize not only the way we view dinosaurs, but also the story of life on Earth.

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Taking the Christopher Columbus Entrance Exam: A Step Toward Brotherhood, Faith and Scholarship

By Carlos Gutiérrez

On Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025, hundreds of eager eighth graders arrived at Christopher Columbus High School to take the highly anticipated entrance exam, a key step for admission.

The exam serves as a gateway for students who aspire to join a community rooted in the Marist tradition, where education transcends the classroom

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The Columbus C statue (Source: Columbus website)

Miami Braces for the Future as Delivery Robots Become the New Normal

By Aquiles Legra

In downtown Miami, something new is moving through the streets, and it's catching everyone's attention. Small delivery robots are rolling around on their own, bringing food from restaurants straight to people's doors. At first, a lot of people weren't sure what to think.

"I thought it was interesting. I thought it was a little weird. I had never seen them before," said local resident Michael Ramirez.

Now that these robots are becoming more common, some people are starting to worry about what they mean for jobs in Miami.

"The number of robots keep growing and it's more convenient for people," added Ramirez. "Then yeah, they could take away a few of those jobs."

Robot deliveries in Miami have gone up more than 120% because of DoorDash, and a study from McKinsey Global Institute says that about 30% of fast-food jobs could be replaced by automation by 2030. That has a lot of people wondering what the future will look like.

"I think it's scary, but I think it's exciting at the same time," said chief innovation officer of Mater Brickell, Steven Iglesias. "For the first time in history, tech is outpacing how fast we can adapt as a society."

One place already using AI is Sergio's restaurant. They have a robot that carries plates from the kitchen to customers to help the servers, not replace them.



Carlos Gazitua, CEO of Sergio's Cafe, shares his perspective on how delivery robots could shape the future of Miami.

"The thought of the robot was, could the robot bring out the food for the server so the server could take more tables and we could not lose the guest?" said the CEO of Sergio's Restaurant, Carlos Gazitua. "We can turn the tables faster, which generates more income for the restaurant, more income for the server, and a faster experience for the guests."

But some workers still feel unsure about it.

"It was always a concern for employees," said one of Sergio's workers, Lesbeth Mesa. "It scares me for the future because it's really doing the work that we humans should be doing."

Miami-Dade County leaders say

they're paying attention to these changes.

"Our job is always to just sort of monitor the situation and provide the proper tools to private business for them to succeed," said Miami-Dade Commissioner Anthony Rodriguez.

As AI becomes a bigger part of everyday life in Miami, the focus is shifting toward how people will adapt. The technology isn't slowing down, so everyone will have to learn how to use it and understand it.

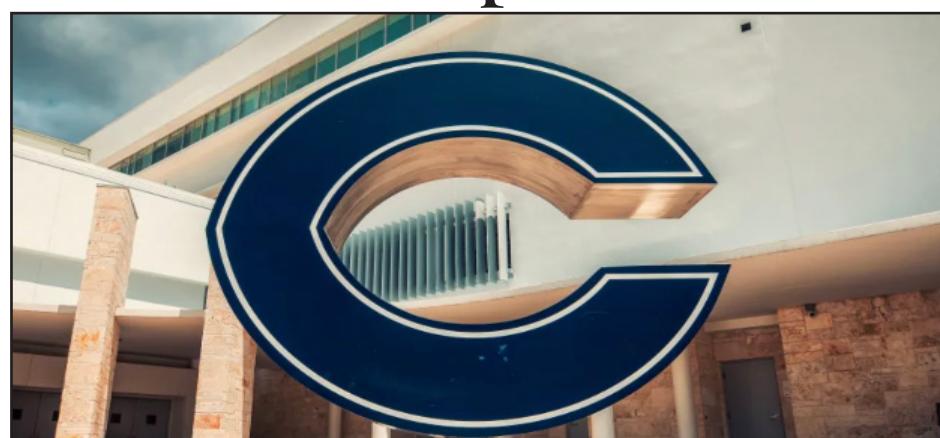
"We're going to have to learn not only what AI is, but we're going to have to use it," also said Iglesias.

At this point, it's not about whether AI will keep growing — it will. The

real question is how Miami prepares for the changes coming with it.



Taking the Christopher Columbus Entrance Exam: A Step Toward Brotherhood, Faith and Scholarship



The Columbus C statue (Source: Columbus website)

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nity rooted in the Marist tradition, where education transcends the classroom and shapes young men academically, socially and spiritually. For many, this day marks the beginning of a journey toward excellence and brotherhood.

Admission to Columbus as a freshman is based on a combination of

factors: performance on the entrance exam, recent grades and standardized test scores. The application process begins in September, followed by an Open House in November, giving families a chance to experience the school's campus and values firsthand. Columbus' mission is clear, to develop young men of character who thrive in all aspects of life. With its Mission Statement of Brotherhood, Faith and Scholarship, the school promises an environment that fosters leadership, service and lifelong learning.

The entrance exam itself measures verbal, quantitative, reading, math and language skills, providing a baseline for academic readiness.

"Everyone is testing under the same conditions on the same day," explained Michael Marinelli, Columbus' Admissions Director. "The exam gives us a local and national percentile to gauge grade-level mastery."

Marinelli also noted an uptick in applications in recent years, a testament to the school's reputation for rigorous academics and a strong sense of community.

"We offer a well-rounded experience, great extracurriculars, sports and academics which makes Columbus so attractive," he said.

For students, the day was filled with anticipation and hope.

David Del Valle, a student who took the exam, said, "What motivates me would be the thought of attending the same school as so many of my family members. Columbus is an amazing school that could truly help me get into a prestigious college."

His pre-exam ritual?

"Eggs, toast and bacon...to get my brain going."

Similarly, Christian "Cuco" Sarria expressed a mix of excitement and

nerves.

"I have studied and prepared for months. Now I just want the day to come so I can do my very best," he said.

For Marc Perez '30, the goal was clear: "My biggest goal is to earn a place in Columbus' prestigious Mas Program."

Parents echoed the significance of this milestone beyond academics.

"I hope my son walks away from this experience knowing how capable he is," said Christy Sarria, Christian's mom. "No matter the outcome, his effort and dedication already make him a success."

For many families, the exam represents more than a test; it's a step toward joining a legacy of faith and brotherhood.

As the test concluded, students left with a sense of accomplishment and anticipation for what lies ahead. For those who earn admission, the next four years will be filled with opportunities to learn, lead and serve, hallmarks of the Marist tradition.

At Christopher Columbus High School, the journey toward greatness begins with a single step: the entrance exam.

Miami's Underwater Art Park The Reefline Aims to Save Coral

By Sean Murphy

Miami Beach is famous for its energy, diversity, and postcard-worthy coastline. But beneath the surface, a quiet transformation is underway.

For curator and environmental activist Ximena Caminos, art has never been just something to display — it has always been her way of pushing for progress.

"Art is my tool. I use this tool to create positive change," she said.

Caminos spent years shaping exhibitions around issues she cared about, but eventually felt called to something bigger than the traditional art world. The next chapter of her work sits 700 feet off South Beach, where the ocean itself has become her gallery space.

"I decided that art wasn't enough," she said. "I wanted to use the arts as advocacy for the environmental crisis."

That shift in purpose led to the creation of The Reefline, an underwater installation designed not only as public art, but as a living structure to aid coral recovery along the Florida coast.

The effort comes as Florida's reefs face rapid decline. Roughly 70 percent of reef sites lose habitat annually, weakening one of the planet's most essential ecosystems. Caminos joined forces with scientists to design a project that blends imagination with envi-



Ximena Caminos speaking to an environmental event. (Credit: CCNN)

ronmental repair.

"Basically, we merged art and ecology in an underwater sculpture park here in Miami Beach," she said.

A major phase launched in October, when teams placed 22 car sculptures on the seafloor, giving damaged reefs new surfaces to grow on.

Researchers quickly began using the installation. Marine biologist Colin Ford, who works alongside Caminos, says the sculptures are built to hold coral fragments so they can flourish over time.

"We're using these coral locks to attach the corals to the sculptures," Ford said. "And every car has about 20 of these."

What started as one curator's vi-

sion has expanded into a city-backed initiative. More than 60 percent of Miami Beach voters supported funding through local taxes, pushing the project from concept to reality.

"This is the fulfillment of a dream that I've had for a long time," she said. "To work with native corals, they have a very special place in my heart."

Caminos hopes The Reefline becomes a spark for environmental awareness, showing how creative ideas can uplift natural ecosystems.

"What inspired me is to give back to nature what I think nature has given us so generously," she said. "You need a spark to light a fire."

Understanding the Purpose of Florida House Bill 757: Protecting Against Nonconsensual Image Sharing

By Oscar Pinto

Students were already talking before first period even began.

A rumor spread quickly through the halls, phones lit up with alerts, and a name kept resurfacing in every conversation. By mid-morning, a student realized why the attention had shifted toward them. An AI-generated nude image, created without their involvement, was circulating across campus and being viewed by classmates who had no idea it was fake.

This situation shows how serious digital manipulation and nonconsensual image sharing have become. To address these problems, Florida passed House Bill 757, signed on Oct. 1, 2025. The law makes it illegal to create, share, solicit, view, or promote nude or sexually explicit images of an identifiable person without their consent, including AI-generated deepfakes or altered pictures.

To understand the law entirely, it helps to look at what it does, why it exists, and why it matters to teens.

What HB 757 Does

Florida House Bill 757 imposes penalties on people who create or spread explicit images without consent. These penalties are meant to protect victims and reduce exploitation.

Even with these protections, many teens do not know what the law says or even that the law exists. Many also do not realize how much emotional and social harm victims can experience. People who are targeted may deal with distress, social isolation, and long-term psychological effects. Learning about these impacts can build empathy and prevent harmful behavior.

Victims may face anxiety, depression, or loss of trust. These experiences can affect relationships, self-esteem, and even future opportunities, such as college admissions or employment. Understanding these results helps teens see why the law is essential.

In Depth: What HB 757 Covers

Rep. Mike Redondo and Rep. Jennifer Kincart Jonsson introduced HB 757 to address the rise of AI-generated deepfakes and the sharing of nonconsensual nude images.

"HB 757 aims to prohibit lewd imagery or depictions involving a child, whether real or digitally created, and ban generating or possessing altered sexual images of identifiable people without consent," Jonsson said.

The law includes different felony levels:

Third-degree felony

Someone who possesses, controls, or intentionally views a nude image,

views any child pornography, or creates an altered sexual depiction of a person can be charged with a third-degree felony. This includes using AI to generate nude images of someone.

Second-degree felony

Someone who has a nude picture of a person and intends to promote it without consent can be charged with a second-degree felony. It also applies to generating an altered sexual image of a person and intending to promote it.

Sentencing guidelines

Third-degree felony: Up to five years in prison and fines up to \$5,000.

Second-degree felony: Up to 15 years in prison and fines up to \$10,000.

The law applies to adults and teenagers.

According to a 2022 Thorn report, about 20 percent of minors ages 13 to 17 have shared nude or near-nude images of themselves, which makes this law especially relevant.

Why HB 757 Was Introduced

Jonsson explained that HB 757 was created to strengthen Florida's laws regarding sexual images involving minors and the creation or alteration of explicit photos without consent.

The bill came during the rapid growth of artificial intelligence tools that can create or change images, in-

cluding ChatGPT, Meta AI, and Sora AI. Older laws did not address these technologies.

"HB 757 was formed to close that gap and prevent this form of digital exploitation," Jonsson said.

Awareness Among Teens

A recent school survey of the Columbus student body found that more than 90 percent had not heard of HB 757. If the law is meant to prevent digital exploitation, schools in Florida must improve awareness.

Even among the students who know about the law, more than 76 percent said they did not understand the consequences of spreading or promoting lewd images.

Teachers say this is not surprising. Students today read less, and many do not keep up with policy changes.

"Students will read more when they feel they can be readers, but many do not see school reading as relevant," according to the South Carolina Education Association.

At Columbus, the administration brings in a public speaker every year to address online safety. This year, the school invited Ben Tracy, a nationally known speaker on youth online safety and social media. He spoke to students about the dangers of spreading lewd images and shared real stories to help them understand the impact.

Heis-Mendoza: Columbus Quarterback Wins Heisman

By Ale Menendez

On Dec. 13, 2025, Columbus Class of 2022 alum Fernando Mendoza walked on stage to receive the Heisman Trophy in New York City after a historic season as Indiana's quarterback, leading the Hoosiers to an undefeated regular season, a Big Ten title and the top seed in the College Football Playoff.

On top of that, he became the first Columbus alumnus to win the Heisman Trophy, with watch parties from the Columbus community around the country.



On Dec. 13, 2025, the CCNN Live team celebrated the win at their annual holiday gathering (Source: CCNN Live)

Early Career

Growing up, Mendoza was not the kind of kid you would expect to be hoisting the Heisman Trophy above his head and leading an undefeated, No. 1-ranked college football team.

"If you told me as a kid growing up in Miami that I'd be here onstage holding this prestigious trophy, I probably would have laughed, cried like I'm doing now, or both," Mendoza said at the beginning of his Heisman acceptance speech.

Now, it's obvious that Mendoza, like many of the greatest athletes, was often overlooked in his early years, such as Michael Jordan missing the cut for his high school varsity basketball team. But from the outside looking in at Mendoza's stats and placement in high school, no one could have seen this coming.

A No. 140-ranked quarterback and the No. 2,149 overall player, Mendoza was not on anyone's bingo card for winning the Heisman or even necessarily playing FBS Division I football.



Fernando posing with his little brother and dad during the 2022 Senior Game at Columbus Field. (Source: Adelante Staff)

Initially committing to Yale (Division I but not FBS), Fernando almost missed out on even playing at the



Heisman Trophy winner quarterback Fernando Mendoza of Indiana with The Heisman Memorial Trophy during a news conference at the Marriott Marquis Hotel on Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025, in New York. (Adam Hunger/Getty Images/TNS)

highest college level. However, after receiving a last-minute call and making a spontaneous visit to UC Berkeley, Fernando committed and was able to at least give himself a shot at competing with the best.

UC Berkeley

With this opportunity in hand, Mendoza was not able to display the full product of his game as soon as he set foot in California. Instead, most of his work was done behind closed doors as he redshirted his freshman year, only to win the starting job in his second year, when he threw for 1,708 yards, 14 TDs and led the team to an Independence Bowl appearance.

But the product of all Mendoza's hard work was truly put on national display in his junior year. Much to the dismay of many University of Miami fans, Mendoza showed no mercy in his matchup with the Hurricanes, throwing for 285 yards and two touchdowns in a grueling 39-38 loss.

Despite losses such as this, Mendoza never put his head down as a member of the Golden Bears and continued to push them to a 6-6 record with another bowl game appearance.

Through ups and downs, Mendoza refused to quit during his time on the West Coast. And though in retrospect this time of his career could be overlooked in favor of his success at Indiana, one cannot discount its significance in shaping him as a team player and leader.

Traversing wins and losses and working in the shadows, Fernando was finally able to garner some success. But after his third season, he decided to follow his brother Alberto, a 2024 Columbus graduate and Indiana backup quarterback, across the country to Indiana University for the 2025

season.

Indiana

There's not much to say about Mendoza's 2025 season at Indiana besides the fact that it was almost flawless. Boasting a 13-0 record and three Top 25 wins against No. 1 Ohio State and No. 2 Oregon, Mendoza transformed a program previously renowned solely for basketball into the most feared team entering the College Football Playoff.

"We were never supposed to be in this position, but by the glory of God, the great coaches, the great teammates, everyone we have around us, we were able to pull this off. Now the Hoosiers are flippin' champs!" Mendoza said after winning the Big Ten championship.

And it's this enthusiasm and charisma as a leader that has not only garnered him national attention but has also allowed him to be such an effective leader for the Hoosiers.

"If there were 25 hours in a day, he'd spend all 25 preparing to be great," Indiana head coach Curt Cignetti said.

And with this mindset, Mendoza has achieved success and looks ahead to the most important part of the season yet.

Columbus Influence

Shouting out Columbus in his post-Heisman interview, Mendoza spoke of the honor not just to put Columbus but the entire city of Miami on the map for football with his Heisman victory.

"The reason I'm at this stage is because of Miami," Mendoza said in his speech.

Playing against players like Ruben Bain and D'Angelo Ponds in a fast-

paced Miami game proved essential for Mendoza's ability to adapt so well to the college game.

In terms of what his coaches have to say about him, it's easy to see why he's so successful.

"He's just the nicest kid off the field," and "the type of young man you want to marry your daughter," but "on the field, he's a stone-cold killer," Columbus football coach Coach Dunn said.

More Than Football

"Mommy, this is your trophy as much as it is mine. You've always been my biggest fan. You're my light. You're my why. You're my biggest supporter," an emotional Mendoza said during his Heisman speech.

And though it's easy to get caught up in his talent on the field, Mendoza's character remains the most important part of who he is and the reason for his success.

Just take his Heisman speech, for example, where he focused not on himself but rather on those who supported him and the communities that believed in him. In a moment meant to be about him, he turned the spotlight onto others.

It's this selflessness and character, both on and off the field, that led Mendoza to the Heisman — and the same character he will bring with him as the Hoosiers look toward the College Football Playoff in hopes of winning their first national championship.

The Columbus Ice Hockey Skates Into Its Second Season

By Maximus Barrenechea

The Columbus Ice Hockey Club is starting its second season after many improvements from last year.

Founding of the Club

Ice Hockey is a sport that you don't see in many schools, especially schools in Florida, and two years ago you wouldn't see it in Christopher Columbus High School either.

That changed after Junior Vicente Diaz brought his love of hockey to Columbus and founded the Ice Hockey Club. The club started out as just playing hockey with friends after school, but was transformed into a legitimate team after Eric Pino stepped up as a moderator and helped organize the club by finding a league, creating a schedule, and establishing the competitive side of the Columbus Ice Hockey Club.

First Season

The team officially hit the ice last year, finishing its first season with a record of 3-15-2. While the season's result didn't fully meet expectations, the experience helped set a strong foundation for the team.

"We had high expectations," said junior Vicente G Diaz, "but the program is just starting, and a lot of people were new to the sport."

That first season gave the team information of what needed to be improved. Players began making changes in practice, focusing more on fundamentals and studying game film to enhance their skills and teamwork.

However, the team is not recognized by the FHSAA, therefore, it could not receive official school funding or be considered an official varsity sport. Rather than let that discourage them, the players turned it into motivation. They began selling custom Columbus Ice Hockey jerseys and merchandise, which was a major success and was loved by students and teachers.

"The first game was great," Diaz said. "Everyone was wearing Columbus merch. There was so much Columbus representation — it really felt like brotherhood."

Postseason

After the season ended, the team didn't stop working; they got a new moderator and stayed active by training on the ice, watching film, and growing the program.

"We kept talking about hockey, kept training, and kept promoting the team," Diaz explained. "We

wanted to come back better and more connected."

The offseason also allowed them to reflect over the team and make the necessary improvements. Diaz also emphasized the importance of team chemistry after the difficulties they faced last year.

"We're really focused on bonding as a team and taking the game more seriously," he said. "We've got four new players and new talent this year — the team is more put together. Now it's about getting everyone on the same page."

This Season

Now entering the second season in the club's history, the Explorers are currently 1-4 with a goalie suspension and injury early in the season. However, despite the setbacks, the team has not wavered and is still confident in their ability to win. Their replacement goalie has been performing extremely well and the team has been working together and shown more improvement. The team's current goal is to finish with an over .500 record and continue expanding the team. With the constant gain in members and the growing interest in Ice Hockey as a sport the team is sure to improve.



Ian Mundy, Michael Babun, Ranier Garrido and Lucas Chacon of the Columbus Ice Hockey Team during its first game of the season at the Coral Springs Ice Den on Oct. 17, 2025. Photo Credit:

@cchs_ice_hockey



The team jerseys. Photo Credit: @cchs_ice_hockey

Columbus Golf Wraps Season at State Championship

By Diego Rodriguez Deshon



Columbus golf team and coaches Marinelli and Hayes posing at the FHSAA State Championship via Coach Marinelli

The Christopher Columbus High School Golf Team has wrapped up their 2025 season competing in the FHSAA Class 3A State Championship at the Mission Inn Resort in Orlando on November 11-12. The Explorers traveled to states to compete and face off against the top 16 golf programs in Florida, while having to endure extreme weather conditions that challenged every aspect of their game.

The opening round began with an unexpected one hour frost delay, which introduced the players to what they were up against, with temperatures down to 36 degrees with wind-chills in the mid-20s. These conditions forced players to adjust their swings and strategies which would be

the greatest challenge of all.

"We had to think about how the thermal layers affected our swing and how much the wind and cold would change the ball flight," said Junior Eduardo Marin

Despite the harsh weather, the Explorers stayed locked in. Sophomore Jake Williams was able to deliver one of the standout performances of the tournament, leading the entire course for 33 holes. He reached 4 under par at one point while going head-to-head with an Auburn commit senior. Williams finished tied 6th overall with rounds of 71 and 77.

"Competing at that level as a sophomore really showed me what it takes to perform under pressure. It pushed me to grow and gave me confidence that I can hang with the best," he said.

Columbus ultimately finished 9th with a team total of 629 (+53). Senior Joe Fernandez closed out his Explorer career with scores of 84-75 (159), showing determination and grit in his final round. As well as fellow senior Marcelo González posted 164, ending his high school career with pride.

"States was super competitive, and it was the biggest test for our team. I'm so proud of how we fought through the cold and rep-

resented Columbus one last time," said Senior Marcelo González

The squad also included freshman Sebastian Eterovic, who shot 164 in his state championship debut, building valuable experience for the program's future. Three of the five starters are returning next season with experience and are ready for what is to come. Head Coach Mr. Marinelli explained why the experience mattered so much for such a young group.

"We always go in believing we can win, but with how young we are and the weather being something we're not used to, it really turned into a great learning experience under true championship pressure."

Through cold temperatures, elite competition, and two intense rounds, the Explorers represented Columbus with talent, resilience, and pride showing exactly why their future is bright.



Columbus golf team posing at the El campeón via Coach Marinelli



Freshman Sebastian Eterovic swinging via Coach Marinelli



Senior Marcelo González shooting on the course via Coach Marinelli

Explorers Sports Recap: Wrapping up Fall Sports

By Jake Reed

Swim and Dive Regional/State Results

Last Thursday, Nov. 6, the swim and dive team excelled in the regional swim meet. Overall, the team competed well and placed fourth, an improvement from last year's sixth place. Two relay teams, one individual swimmer, and a diver made it to states in Ocala, where on Nov. 14, the Explorers competed in four events.

The Explorers' 200 medley relay team managed to advance to the state B finals and placed 15th. The 400 free relay team almost made it to the finals, missing the cut by just one second. Senior Lucas Franchak also swam well but in the toughest competition was not able to advance to the finals. Returning state medalist junior Gianmarco La Neve was able to place again, this time coming in sixth compared to last year's seventh. Now a two-time medalist, there's no doubt La Neve will return next year seeking a higher placement.

Below are those who competed in the state meet in Ocala:

200 Medley Relay - 15th Place

Marcel Cowley
Lucas Franchak
David Guerra
Sergio Samada

400 Free Relay

David Guerra
Sergio Samada
Illan Villar
Lucak Franchak

100 Breaststroke

Lucas Franchak

Diving

Gianmarco La Neve - 6th Place Medalist

Congratulations to the Swim and Dive Team for their hard work and improvements this past season.

Cross Country Goes Back to Back 1st Place in Districts and Regionals

On Nov. 7, the Hellions competed at the 4A District 8 Championship. Four Hellions finished in the top 10:

senior Diego Eseverri (1st), senior Alexander Lopez (4th), sophomore Nico Garcia (8th), and senior Fede Llaguno (9th). With a total score of 39 points, Columbus earned the top spot on their 30th district championship.

On Nov. 12, the Hellions reaffirmed their statement at the regional championship at Larry and Penny Thompson Park. They took home first place out of 16 teams with a 16:20 team average, which is the second-fastest team average in school history on this difficult course. Eseverri led the team again with a second-place finish and a 15:47 time (second fastest in school history on this course). Three additional runners joined him in the top 10 featured below.

The Columbus community is extremely proud of the hard work the cross country team has put forward. We especially applaud senior Lucas González, who signed to continue his academic and athletic career at Babson College. We look forward to what the Hellions have in store for the state championship next week on Nov. 22. Good luck!

Columbus Golf Team Wraps up the Season

The Columbus golf 2025 season came to an end with the FHSAA Class 3A State Championship Nov. 11–12. Out of the top 16 teams in Florida, Columbus placed ninth overall, marking a strong season for the young program that has three out of five starters returning next year.

Sophomore Jake Williams took the spotlight this week while leading for 33 holes at the state championship, at one point being 4 under par. Williams ended up placing sixth overall, yet still was able to stand out as the first non-senior on the leaderboard. Senior Joe Fernandez followed with scores of 84–75 (159), showcasing the toughness Columbus stands for in his final event as an Explorer. Senior Marcelo Gonzalez and junior Eduardo Marin both carded 164 totals, and freshman Sebastian Eterovic matched that score in his first state performance, signaling a strong future for him and the Explorers golf team.

"The boys demonstrated incredible composure and represented Columbus with class and pride as always, which is what we expect. Congratulations to our golfers and a special thank you to my assistant coach Chris Hayes for his dedication and help all season long," said Coach Marinelli.

Columbus Football Paves its Way to Semifinals

The Columbus football team faced

off against Santaluces (Lantana) on Friday, Nov. 14. The 6 p.m. game was a battle on the ground. Columbus took over the run game completely. Both senior RB Joey Triana and senior RB Shawn James each were able to rush for a touchdown. Junior QB Kingston Rust also had a stellar performance, punching in two touchdowns of his own.

The Explorers defense is where the standout performance brought the game home. Intense pressure from the defense as a whole forced the Santaluces offense into several turnovers. Junior FS Ivan Houston came down with two interceptions. Senior DE Jonathan Nua and senior OLB Ethan Barosela each had fumble recoveries. Good effort from both sides resulted in Columbus' ability to pull way ahead going into the second half.

With this clutch and dominant 28–3 win against Santaluces, Columbus' record is now 4–7. This Friday, they have their sights set on Miami Palmetto High School, which is currently 9–2 but faced off against Columbus earlier in the season. That matchup was extremely close, resulting in Columbus coming just short at 21–24.

Make sure to congratulate the players on their playoff win.



Explorers golf team and coaches Marinelli and Hayes posing at the FHSAA State Championship on November 14 via Coach Marinelli

Sports

Christopher Columbus High School

Quarter 2 Review

January 2026

Thousands of Miles for Columbus Football

By Kingston Rust

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Deuce has a clear vision of why he grinds the way he does.

"I picture myself being in the NFL, giving back to my family, retiring my parents, and letting them live a carefree life," he says.

That goal fuels his approach to every rep, and coaches notice it. They call him a "big baby" in the sense that he is still growing into his frame, but the excitement they see in him and the potential is unmistakable. Whether it is early-morning drills or extra conditioning after practice, Deuce commits himself to the kind of effort most people will never witness.

His path to Columbus was not simple. To chase football seriously, he left his home in Hawaii and moved more than 5,000 miles away, a leap that would challenge even the most seasoned athletes.



Laulelei Sualevai on the sidelines during a game. (Credit CCNN)

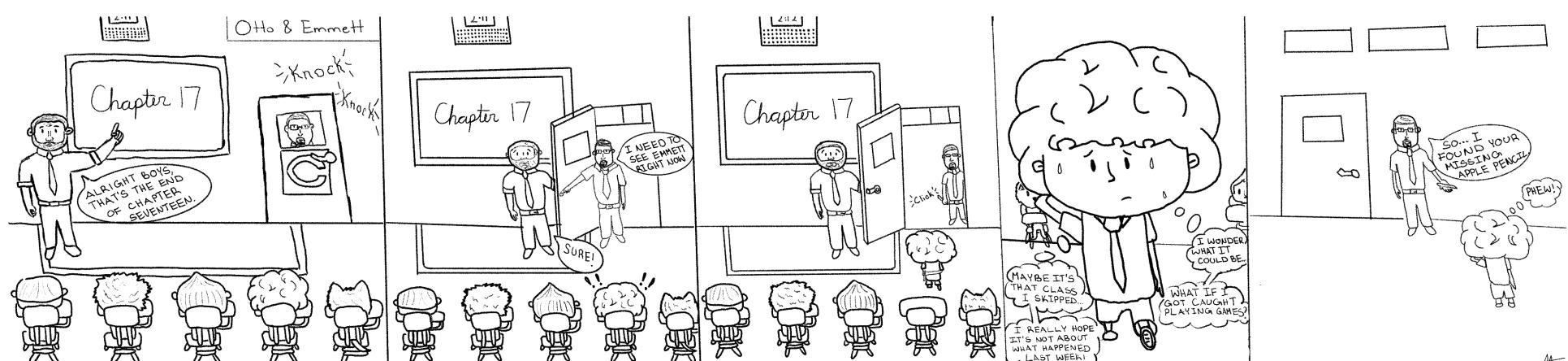
Despite the distance, his family remains a constant presence, offering encouragement and reminders to trust God and stay locked in before every game.

While offensive linemen rarely receive the spotlight, their work shapes every offensive play. Deuce embraces that reality. He does not need the ball in his hands to feel the importance of his role. Every successful drive is proof of the impact he makes in the trenches.

At only 15, Deuce is learning what it means to sacrifice comfort for opportunity. His story reflects a truth often overlooked in sports. Greatness often begins in the unseen spaces: the weight room, the practice field, the moments when no one is watching.

For Deuce, each snap is another step toward his dream and another way to honor the people who gave him the chance to pursue it.

COMIC STRIP



by Allan Tompkins

Features

Dr. Phil Currie: The Dinosaur Champion

By Juan-Pablo Pina

For 150 million years, planet Earth was ruled by an awe-inspiring group of special reptiles: dinosaurs. Over the course of their reign, they not only shared the planet with many long-gone creatures like strange crocodile-relatives and flying and marine reptiles, but they also died alongside them. 66 million years after their reign ended, humanity began to harvest the rich and macabre crop of this ancient world, with a few men and women becoming as famous as the dragons they uncovered.

When I went to Alberta, Canada, I got to meet one such scientist: Dr. Philip J. Currie. And while he may not have been the first person to describe a dinosaur (that title goes to Gideon Mantell who named Megalosaurus in 1827), his work has championed the creatures that came before in ways that would revolutionize not only the way we view dinosaurs, but also the story of life on Earth.

Part I. The First Dragon Encounters

Dr. Phil Currie wasn't always a dinosaur kid. However, his first encounter with the dragons of the past changed that.

“It started with a Rice Krispies box and a plastic Dimetrodon. Of course, Dimetrodon is not a dinosaur, it’s a mammal-like reptile so to speak, but it was the beginning. That’s what started my interest in dinosaurs when I was six. I really wanted to collect the whole set [of plastic Rice Krispies dinosaurs] of eight. But they were smart and made the T. rex very hard to get so that people would buy more Rice Krispies and my parents were the kind to say ‘Well the plastic prize is at the bottom of the box, you have to eat the whole box first’. So I went through box after box after box of Rice Krispies, and to this day I can’t eat Rice Krispies anymore as a cereal.”

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

But it didn't stop there. As one day, he discovered what could be called his “Book of Dragons”.

“When I was 11 I stepped on a nail and was confined to the classroom during recess and lunch, and at the back of the room I found this book by Roy Chapman Andrews. It’s called ‘All About Dinosaurs’ but it’s really about what it’s like to be a paleontologist, and Andrews was very good at describing dinosaurs but also [his] expeditions from the American Museum of Natural History to Mongolia.”

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

The book, which read like a medieval bestiary (and still does), told of ancient worlds where huge flying reptiles soared over deserts and swamps dominated by animals with bizarre ornaments and proportions. But it also told of the “cemeteries” where these ancient worlds lay, plac-

es on Earth that would seem almost like the graveyard of Isla Nublar. And it was then that Currie knew his quest: track down the dragon graveyards and learn anything and everything. And not only would his quest go far beyond what he (or, to be frank, anyone else) imagined, but he would be one of the pioneers charting a course to a whole new way of seeing the beasts of the past.

Part II. Becoming a Dragon Master

An important factor to take into account when discussing Dr. Phil Currie's story is where he was born and raised. While some may have to use convoluted genetic technology and break various ethical rules in order to see dinosaurs (a la Jurassic Park) or use colliders to welcome them into our world via wormholes (a la Primitive War), Currie had to do no such thing as his backyard was like a dragon graveyard.

80 million-66 million years ago, much of western North America was a tropical swampland not unlike the Florida Everglades of today. Fern prairies, forests, shorelines and wetlands covered this prehistoric world that housed monsters. Alberta, Canada in specific sits on what is now recognized as several layers in the geologic record including the Wapiti Formation (80-68 million years ago), the Oldman Formation (77.5-76.5 million years ago), the Dinosaur Park Formation (76.5-74.4 million years ago), the Bearpaw Formation (75-72 million years ago) the Horseshoe Canyon Formation (~73.1-68 million years ago) and many others. Each of these layers, characterized by telltale signs of environmental changes, is beholden to the remains of a terrifying and beautiful roster of ancient life. Charismatic creatures like Albertosaurus, Borealopelta, Centrosaurus, Cryodrakon, Edmontosaurus, Ornithomimus and Prognathodon shared an Edenic world that managed to preserve them all in exquisite detail thanks to the composition of the environment that both buried them quickly and kept their remains safe for the following 80-66 million years. In fact, the province of Alberta alone is host to 5% of the species that make up the clade Dinosauria (which is quickly approaching the 1,000+ mark). Not a bad place to start when you're hoping to become a master in natural history.

And, as the years rolled out, Currie took opportunity after opportunity, landing himself job after job until he “stepped into the shoes” of people like Roy Chapman Andrews, the Sternbergs and even Barnum Brown (all of which famous fossil-hunters).

“...I think one of the reasons I got to where I am is because of how competitive I am. I just took every opportunity and, well, here I am.”

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

And he's not wrong. While films like Jurassic Park have painted pale-

ontology as exclusively for bone-diggers who can put up with the stinging desert heat, it's a highly multidisciplinary field. Even at a college level climatology, entomology, environmental science, geology and zoology are all field that meet and mingle to try and not just uncover the bones, but also reveal what the surroundings on the bones tell us and what nearby remains and signs reveal about the everchanging planet these organisms lived on. And even seemingly trivial skills like algebra, chemistry, dataset-building, geometry, statistics and writing can make-or-break one's efforts to get a career in the world of paleontology. Another paleontologist, Dr. Carry Woodruff of the Philip and Patricia Frost Science Museum (who also co-authored the graphic novel “Sauropods: The Largest Animals to Ever Walk the Earth”), even had a say in the matter when I went to speak with him in the preparation lab:

“You can’t just say ‘Oh, I wanna study dinosaurs, I wanna just do this’. I hate to say it, but the classes you don’t want to take are the ones that will help you out the most. Math, statistics, chemistry...I remember I had to do three-dimensional geometry when I was trying to figure out which bones were which and I was like ‘Oh my god!’ Plus, there’s also writing, which is nothing like novels...saying things clearly so that people can understand you in a paper could be the difference whether or not your paper gets published in a journal or even gets read.”

-Dr. Carry Woodruff

Eventually, Currie managed to become a professor of dinosaur palaeobiology of the University of Alberta. In fact, when I went to Alberta, our 14 kilometer trek to the Albertosaurus bonebed (a site wherein 20+ individuals of the T. rex-relative Albertosaurus en masse) was accompanied by two students of his who, like Dr. Currie himself, were experts in knowing how to get to the site fastest and safest and even zeroing in on an Albertosaurus tooth with near-military precision.

And while finding new fossils at a site are great, it's not the highlight of his career. Instead, Dr. Currie not only managed to become a master in the field of dragon-finding, but he (quite literally) rewrote the story of Dinosauria as well as our understanding of them...

Part III. Re-Writing the Dinosaur Story

Our understanding of the dinosaurs and their world is always changing. If the Chinese who believed dinosaur fossils were dragon bones saw the modern reconstructions of animals like Utahraptor, they'd probably label them as some variety of feathered serpent or feathered demon. But even today, Dinosauria is getting makeover after makeover, and Dr. Currie has been a part of a few of those...

“Of course, during the Dinosaur Renaissance a lot of new ideas were put forward. One of them was that dinosaurs were related to birds. And people thought it was stupid because until then dinosaurs were stupid and slow creatures that lived in swamps.”

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

After World War II (which had put a halt on all paleontological research and attention), many new ideas about what dinosaurs were arose. Especially after the discovery of the raptor dinosaur Deinonychus, there was growing evidence to not only suggest that non-avian dinosaurs were smarter and more active than we had thought but also that there was a link between them and birds (which we now recognize as avian dinosaurs).

Paleontologist John Ostrom was not only the man who discovered and described Deinonychus, but was also one of the people who spearheaded the idea that dinosaurs were way more than we first thought. He suggested that they had a warm-blooded metabolism like those of birds and mammals as well as that dinosaurs were directly related to birds, eventually theorizing that some dinosaurs may have had feathers. Alas, he was often ridiculed for his theories. Until one very special day when the remains of a single animal proved everything (and more) right.

From 1986 to 1991, paleontologists from Canada and China began to “switch places” once a hefty amount of evidence suggested that the dinosaurs from each country were very similar, leading to the very natural question of “Why?”. Thus expeditions were carried out across Alberta, Montana, Sichuan, the Arctic Circle, the Gobi Desert and Xinjiang in a colossal international quest to understand one of the most mysterious and captivating times and organisms in Earth's history. Among the finds were 66 primitive horned dinosaurs in a single site, a dinosaur's braincase, the discovery of Alxasaurus, the discovery of five juvenile armored dinosaurs, the discovery of Mamenchisaurus, the discovery of Monolophosaurus and the discovery of Sinraptor. But there was one find in particular that would change (almost literally) everything.

The amazing thing, though, was that when we started the Canada-China Dinosaur Project is that it gave me opportunities I didn't have before, and one of them was to see the first feathered dinosaur...called Sinosauropteryx. It's an animal that just had a huge impact. It's not that the idea was new, again, people like Bob Bakker had already said that dinosaurs were warm-blooded. And dinosaurs may have had feathers, right?...they're directly ancestral to birds.”

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

Sinosauropteryx lived in the tem-

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perate forests of what is now Liaoning Province, China from 124.6-122 million years ago in the Early Cretaceous. It was only about the size of a cat, and it was related to other small theropods (two-legged dinosaurs) like Compsognathus. The unique thing about Sinosauropteryx is that the fossil, a slab of Chinese rock that was once a lakebed, perfectly preserves its feathers. This one animal single-handedly proved that everything John Ostrom and other paleontologists like Bob Bakker and even Dr. Currie himself was proven right.

In fact, during the SVP (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology) meeting of 1995, when Ostrom was in the Hall of Saurischian Dinosaurs in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, Dr. Currie presented Ostrom with images of the Sinosauropteryx fossil.

"Well, considering what the fossil did and his [Ostrom's] theories, I'm pretty sure a tear or two formed in his eyes."

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

But even the Sinosauropteryx wasn't the only example of Dr. Currie practically rewriting the dinosaurs' story. The fossil of a raptor dinosaur called Saurornitholestes (specifically specimen UALVO 55700) preserves a huge sharp bone caught in its neck, and when compared to modern animal behavior like that of Komodo dragons, it shows that sometimes dinosaurs "had eyes bigger than their stomachs". Not only that, but entire "dinosaur graveyards" have been found by Currie and his teams, like a site that preserves 20+ Albertosaurus (a smaller and earlier relative of T. rex). And there was even another dinosaur with evidence for feathers, a complete Struthiomimus (ostrich-like dinosaur) with little pinpricks on its arms that were where feathers once were.

But after garnering so much fame in the field of Dinosauria, eventually Dr. Currie got asked one particular question: "Why?"

Part IV. The Reason Behind the Dragon-Hunt

So...why?

Why spend so many years hunting the remains of dragons in the most remote places on Earth when you could spend that time doing literally anything else? Well, for one thing, their bring in a heck of a lot of money!

"I think dinosaurs have a much greater impact on people than even paleontologists realize sometimes...And with the opening of the Tyrrell Museum, I realized that they have an unbelievable economic impact."

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

In September of 1985, Alberta's official dinosaur museum: the Royal Tyrrell Museum of Paleontology (named after Joseph B. Tyrrell, the first person to discover dinosaur fossils in Alberta in the form of the T. rex-relative Albertosaurus). This was



Dr. Philip J. Currie giving an on-site lecture at the Albertosaurus "bone-bed" in Dry Island Buffalo Jump in Alberta, Canada. (Photo Credit: Juan-Pablo Pina)

also around the time that dinosaurs were becoming popular again, and considering that Alberta is practically the grave of Isla Sorna, the museum would become a palace to be inhabited by the cadavers of its indigenous dragons and wyverns.

"We can make a direct correlation between how many dollars this museum has made and the cost of building the museum. And in that case, it ended up being that the museum payed for itself in tourist dollars in two years, two years!"

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

In 2023, the museum hosted 526,000 visitors, a record-breaker. And this wasn't the only time the museum would "go off-the-charts". In the first opening months, so many people visited the museum that, according to Dr. Currie, "...the car lines got up to seven kilometers long, so people had to walk from their cars to the museum." But even then you have to ask, "Why do people like dinosaurs?"

"Well, I was the kid who never grew up...I always liked dinosaurs...For a long time in my career that was one of the most common questions: 'Why are dinosaurs important?'... 'Why do you want to study them?'...Of course, I have a lot of reasons why I study them, because I like them!"

-Dr. Philip J. Currie

There are many reasons as to why dinosaurs (or natural history in general) fascinate us, and many fellow paleontologists have pondered the question as well. Paleontologist Dr. Darren Naish, notable for his Tetrapod Zoology weblog and many publications like the discovery of Ceratosuchops (a crocodile-faced dinosaur from Europe) and his books like *Cryptozoologicon* and *All Yesterdays*, discussed humankind's fascination with prehistoric life in his book "Dinopedia: A Brief Compendium of Dinosaur Lore".

For one, they look cool. These were animals with aesthetically interesting faces, bony scutes, column-like legs, feathers, frills, hammer-like tails, horns, interesting postures, muscular arms often tipped with meathook-like talons, sleek lines and spikes. In a way, we perceive dinosaurs as "su-

per-animals". You don't have to be a scientist to look at the skeleton of a dinosaur and realize these animals were biological powerhouses. The long legs of these beasts show that they were typically muscular and swift like a supercharged mammal or bird but with a reptilian coat. The forms of the neck and skull have a sense of awe and anatomical prowess that demonstrates acute senses, respiratory prowess and mastery of finding and eating their preferred foods. And the great size of the body cavity, the depth, length and width of the shoulder and hip girdles is surely linked to the presence of a metabolic powerhouse to fuel those great jaws, enormous limbs and grand tails.

But the thing that elephants, giraffes, most birds, pandas, rhinos, sharks, tigers and whales all have in common (outside of the fact that they're all amazing) is the fact that they and their habitats are all under threat. Obviously, though, organisms of the deep past lived in a human-free world. And considering that we like to think of great creatures living in vast and natural frontiers (a la Lord of the Rings, a la Wings of Fire), thinking of prehistoric life removes any sense of guilt we might feel when pondering modern species. It's not hard to imagine ancient wildlife doing battle, eating, growing up, killing, massing in great herds, mating, playing, living and dying in a beautiful and untamed world. But there's probably one more layer to our obsession with prehistoric life: We ask a ton of questions.

More questions are asked about dinosaurs than about any other group of animals. What colors were they? How smart were they? How did they hunt? How did they treat their young? What were their adornments used for? What did they sound like? What did they look like in life? What were the true causes for their extinction? And from dinosaurs, we often see a through-line wherein dinosaurs act almost like a "gateway drug" to other scientific disciplines. They're mysterious and we don't fully understand them, and we, as humans, are drawn to understand the ununderstandable.



®

Features

Marist Youth: Sparking Faith through Community

By Ale Menendez

Every Tuesday night from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the L Building dining hall, students gather for Marist Youth with the help of some Marist brothers in order to fellowship, pray, and have fun together while getting closer to God.

What is Marist Youth?

The gathering usually starts off with a quick icebreaker to get students more comfortable and acquainted with each other. Next, students are prompted to pray through activities such as “silent prayer,” a unique type of prayer where students sit quietly with their eyes closed in worship with God.

“For me, silent prayer genuinely feels like the only time that I can quiet my mind and that helps me get closer to God. It’s a very unique way of praying and I’m so glad that I got introduced to it,” says Columbus senior Nicholas Haddad.

Following this, a student from the Marist Youth staff gives a “talk” that involves some portion of their spiritual journey and is relatable to other high school students. This allows for students to then be placed into groups and discuss how the students’ talk impacted and related to them, encouraging emotional interaction and a deepening of relationships between students.

Last week's speaker, Chris Beceiro, discussed the impact that God has made upon his life.

“It’s great to go up there and talk about my faith and I think that Marist Youth has really given me the courage to do that. Coming here since sophomore year, I’ve really seen my faith grow,” says Beceiro.

Even after Marist Youth is over, it's not uncommon for students to go share a meal after with the new friends that they've made.

Impact on Students

Upon walking into Marist Youth, one may think it to be a simple gathering with not much to do. However, it's only once one opens up to talk to someone, play a game, or share a spiritual experience that they truly get a taste of what Marist Youth is really about.

“Marist Youth has helped me realize that I can see God not only through prayer but also through friendships and community,” says Carrollton senior Alissa Azcuy.

Though the idea of going to a “faith gathering” may seem like a lot of pressure to some students, the idea surrounding Marist Youth is far from a formal prayer time. Instead, it's about gathering in love with God's presence to form relationships that embody what God's true faith

plan is for each one of us.

“It’s taught me how important it is to come together with my friends in a faith environment. And also how important it is for us to help each other grow in our faiths,” says Carrollton senior Wesleigh Vasquez.

It's evident that for those within school and out of school, Marist Youth creates an environment in which students feel free to embark on their faith journey and lift each other up through community.

Running the Show

Although it's easy to just look at all the success in building community and faith that Marist Youth has had, one cannot forget all the work of students and faculty that goes into helping set it up.

Students such as senior Luqui Malabet have had God transform their own faith journey and are now called to do the same so that others can have that same transformation.

“I mean God practically saved my life. I was at a pretty low point at one time and God was really the thing that got me through it. So spreading that message and helping other people feel the love that I felt is why I do Marist Youth.”

And it's this continuous cycle of those finding the faith wanting to spread it that makes Marist Youth such a special place. This is evident in senior Mauricio Gonzalez's journey.

“I started going at the end of my junior year just because some of my friends told me it was fun. And I fell in love with it after the first time going,” says Gonzalez.

Now serving as a leader, Mauricio has learned a lot about what faith and community does, especially at places like Marist Youth.

“I realized that people need people. And how much easier it is to get up from setbacks when you have people around you when you fall. And even the relationships that I make with people that are grounded in faith seem deeper than ones that aren't.”

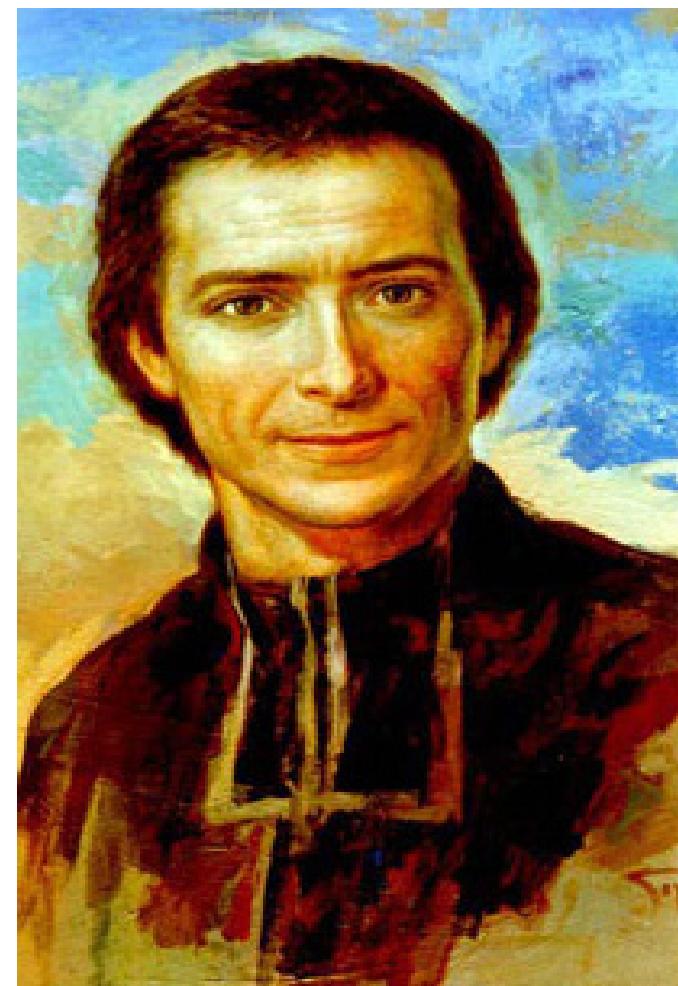
For those who are new to praying, there are leaders to stand by as a guide. For those who have already been coming, there's a community of others to pray and talk with. It seems that whoever you are, there's something and someone for you at Marist Youth.

Next Steps to Join

If interested in going to Marist Youth, you can join in the L Building dining hall every Tuesday from 7 to 8:30 p.m.



Senior Chris Beceiro giving his weekly talk at 8 p.m. at Marist Youth to spread the message of his faith Journey with assistance from Marist Youth Leaders.



Creative - The Twig

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The Legend of the FergerKing

By Jake Reed

Chaos within D21 makes for an unforgettable experience.

This past week has been nothing short of wondrous for Mr. Ferguson. With the release of the “FergerKing” merch, he’s just about struck it rich!

It sold out at record speed, leaving a noticeable gap on the rack at Brother Kevin’s store. At first, everyone thought it was the irresistible style and a widespread homage toward the Physics Guru. But was it irresistible enough for the entire Physics C class to wear it?

On Tuesday, Mr. Linfors stepped in the classroom and was in awe at the sight of over 30 hooded figures in 7 neat rows. They were in the middle of the units 5-6 exam—one of the most difficult in the entire course. Rotation was difficult enough, but rotational energy and momentum? You’d need much more than a previous night’s review to do well on those.

Mr. Linfors asked that the students remove their hoods to respect the Columbus dress code. The students glanced around at each other and hesitantly focused their attention back on the exam.

Everything seemed to be normal until the exam scores came back: 36.67%, 26.67%, and 3.33%. That’s one out of thirty questions. How is that even possible? But then one score shocked the rest: 100%. All eyes shot to the back of the room, where one student had his head down, covered by the hood.

Mr. Linfors uncovered the hood, and a blinding iridescence filled the room. The inner stitching seemed to be alive. Formulas for rotational kinetic energy, angular momentum, and torque problems all lit up a light blue and bounced around like particles in a hyperspace planetarium.

Suddenly the hoodie began to levitate off the student’s body. The image began to warp. “Oh no, he’s kept it on too long!”

It magically rose to the ceiling, glowing in its blue aura. Symbols holographically appeared under: $I=mr^2$, the equation for rotational inertia.

It took a T-shape as if it were obeying a puppet master. Suddenly, one sleeve caught a gust of wind from the air conditioning, and the hoodie began spinning. Faster and faster. The sleeves folded inward. Faster. Faster. Faster. Until... boom!



The glorious FergerKing hoodie in an art gallery

It exploded. A loud ringing filled the room. The memories remain imprinted in the minds of those in period 4; we have not spoken of the FergerKing hoodie since. We all know the FergerKing has its abilities, but we fear its potential.

Resident Hobbitologists Mr. Casals and Mr. Linfors set to take year off to travel to Mordor



Wizard Linfors and his hobbit companion Casals pose prior to their journey.
(ChatGPT generated image)

By Mark Tanner

In breaking Columbus news, beloved Hobbitology teacher Mr. Casals and previous Hobbitology teacher Mr. Linfors have announced a year-long

vacation from Columbus to visit Mordor, the volcanic homeland of Lord of the Rings and, according to Mr. Linfors.

“The only place left that still understands a proper quest,” Linfors said.

The idea reportedly began during a regular faculty meeting where Mr. Linfors texted Mr. Casals a picture of a map of Middle-Earth saying

“Yo are you down? ‘Cause I am.”

Witnesses say Mr. Casals took a 20 second look at the map before responding:

“Is this because you’re tired of students asking if Hobbits are just short humans?”

Mr. Linfors responded with:

“That, and I need to feel something again.”

According to their itinerary, the pair will begin in the Shire, then moving through Rivendell for what Mr. Casals described as **“a very necessary meditation break.”**

They will then proceed straight into

Mordor, where they plan to conduct research on ring-related stress, the long term effects of whispering artifacts on middle-aged men, as well as fighting off some Orcs.

Administrators confirmed substitutes will cover Hobbitology using a curriculum described as mostly movies and a very hard handwritten essay. Mr. Casals left behind a very detailed lesson plan with a note that reads:

“If the board stops working just ask what would Gandalf do.”

Before departing Mr. Linfors handed Mr. Casals a travel request form with Mr. Casals writing:

“I feel a personal need to stand near Mount Doom and think about my life choices.”

The duo plans to return with souvenirs, a bunch of stories, and a new elective titled Advanced Ring Temptation: Why you should not touch that.

Dream Link

by Francesco Armada

I get home after another long day. Tonight, I couldn't finish watching the sunset because another topic chose to occupy my mind. The man with the different colored eyes would not leave my thoughts. The fact that he would often appear in my dreams, and then I saw him in real life, shows me that he is real. I felt the same feeling of longing, but also a sense of security. This is obviously strange because I have never actually met the man. I want to initiate something with him because I want to get to know him better. I'm not sure if he saw me or even knows if I exist.

Wouldn't it be weird if I just opened up with, "So are you the man in my dreams?"

That would be horrible, just thinking about it makes me lose my cool. I need to calm down. I need to think about this logically. Maybe I could do this in a way that makes me comfortable. What if I draw him and then post it on my socials? That could actually work. I get my materials and grab my drawing pad. I imagine the man with the different colored eyes as best as I can. I remember his left eye is white and his right eye is blue. He has brown hair and a more pale-ish skin tone. I can fully remember his facial structure and..... Done.

Looking at the digital drawing, I know I did a good job when the likeness is uncanny. I upload the drawing and post it on my socials with a title that reads, "Drew someone that I recently saw, tell me if it looks like

you." It took me a while to figure out what to put for the title. Could I have mentioned that the man appeared in my dreams? Should I have mentioned where I saw him to narrow it down? I decided that the best way to go about this is simply. Like most things in life, when things are dumbed down to the simplest form, things often go your way. Not sure if that's true for everyone or if it's just exclusively some people. I think I've put enough mental stress on my mind, so a nap seems in order. I'll get back to whoever texts me after I clear my mind with some quality sleep.

of sunsets, and gray and white drawings jumbled among the photos. I attempted to draw something at one point. I'm not very good with articulate hand movements, and that's actually how I found out. I don't have some kind of disorder, but like I just never had that eye for particular things. I think even if I did, my hands wouldn't be able to actually perform the action that my eyes would hypothetically see. I like to think I perform better with thinking. My mind will often go off into the distance and think too much right before I go to sleep. This is probably some kind of symptom of ADHD. I was told growing up that I would make a good lawyer because I would often go into debates knowing more than I should have at the age of 13.

cow was thinking? With the context of today and how important milk is, it might be overlooked. Now, think about what people thought of the person who milked a cow for the first time. Probably not very good.

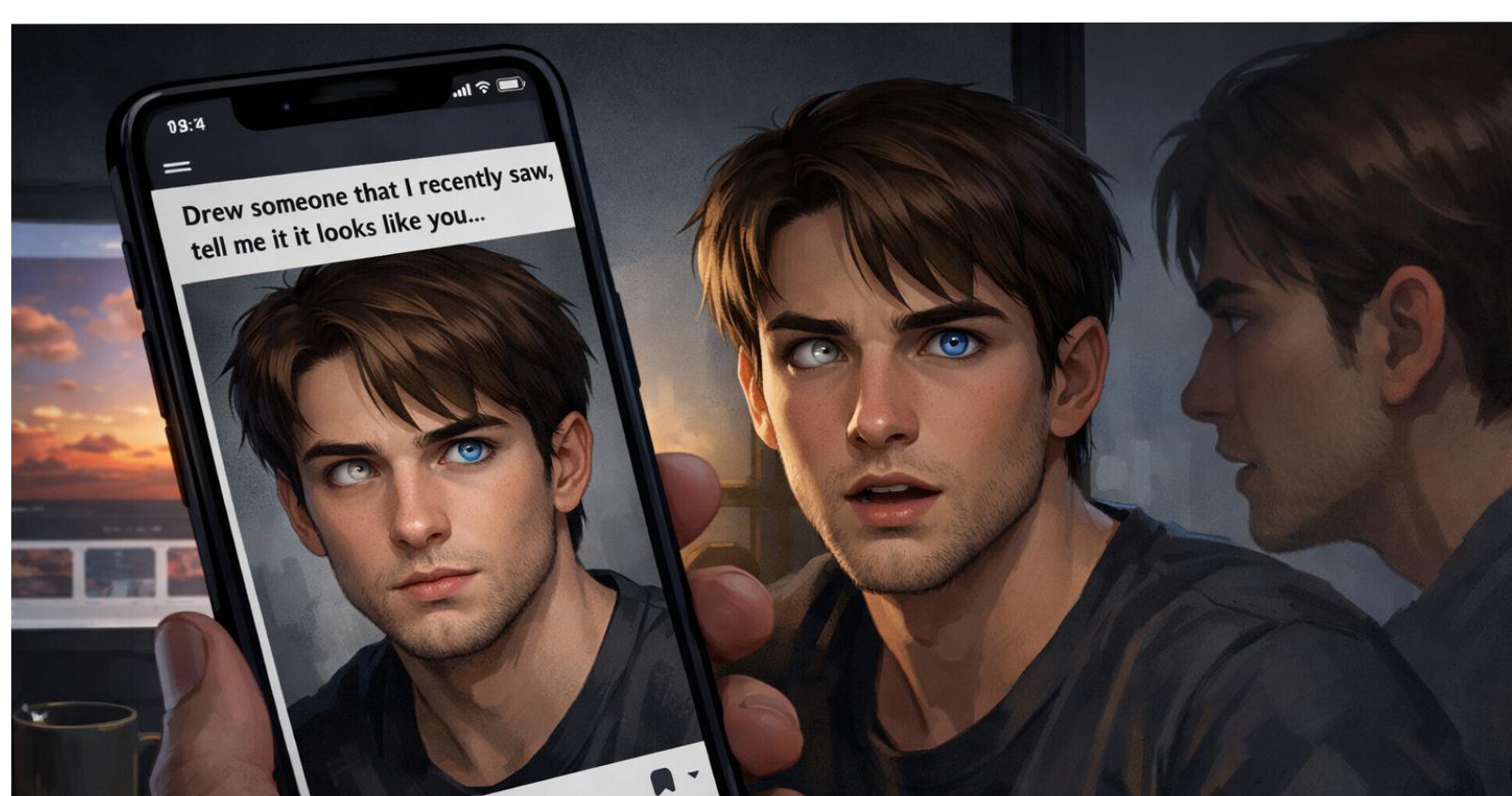
Snapping out of my internal debate, I see the post that had notified me at 11 at night. It's a drawing of a person, and almost an instantly recognizable person at that. I look at the drawing that has an uncanny likeness to me. I look in the mirror next to me and back at the drawing. Part of me is almost blown away at how realistic it is. The different colors of the eyes are almost exact, and the facial structure makes me feel uncomfortable; it's so similar. "Is this level of realism and likeness even possible from a human artist?" I accidentally say out loud. Reading the title of the post, it reads: "Drew someone that I recently saw, tell me if it looks like you." I ponder if I should send a dm to the artist with a photo proving it's me. The thought that it could be some new kind of scam I had never heard of crossed my mind. Scammers are getting smarter and smarter past years, making it hard to tell. I would not be surprised if, by sending a photo of myself or sending a confirmation dm, I might have my data stolen.

Despite having an older mother, I managed to find myself online a lot of the time. The way I see it, the internet can be good or bad depending on who's using it and how they are using it. People with a general negative view on this subject (or any subject for that matter) and don't have the information needed to even grasp the full view of the topic, tend to get me frustrated. My biggest enemy in my adult life is misinformation. Misinformation comes about because people will either only look at something from one angle or, if they are misinforming on purpose, just like to twist the truth. People who misinform people who don't know better than to believe are a prime example of how, in this day and age, truth is relative. With the right context or explanation, anything can be explained. A rather silly example of this is, what do you think the person who discovered milk by milking a

Late at night, I hear a ping from my phone that is resting on my kitchen table. At this point, it's about 11 at night, and the last thing I expect is a notification. Checking my phone, it's from a drawer/painter I found online and followed. This person (I have no idea what gender they are) makes paintings of the sunset and will doodle and draw stuff to post online. I imagine this person also makes a profit out of selling the artworks they post on social media. Whether this is their full-time job or just a hobby is beyond my knowledge.

Scrolling to see the new post, you can see in the blur of photos passing by different vibrant colors, most likely from paintings

I decided to work this out after I had attempted to get some sleep



Opinion

Christopher Columbus High School

Quarter 2 Review

January 2026

Weapons: A Big Step for Modern Horror Movies

By Javier Albite

“Weapons” arrives as one of 2025’s most intriguing horror mysteries, blending psychological unease with grounded, character-driven tension.

Zach Cregger, fresh off the success of *Barbarian*, crafts a film that leans less on jump scares and more on building a slow, unsettling dread. Backed by a standout ensemble cast, the movie unfolds around a disturbing case: seventeen students from the same classroom who vanish without warning on the same night at the exact same moment.

It is a premise that immediately hooks the audience, setting the stage for a horror experience that is as bizarre as it is gripping.

Review

While *Weapons* doesn’t rely on constant scares, the moments of terror it does deliver are very effective. Cregger’s restraint allows each frightening sequence to hit hard. The movie’s best strong suit is the unbri-

dled insanity of the story. Without spoilers, the main plot twist is one of the craziest story elements I’ve seen in any modern film, let alone horror. But the weirdness of it all really sets that creepy atmosphere. All the unusual story beats make for an oddly engaging horror setting.

Beyond its narrative ambition, *Weapons* is elevated by its performances. The ensemble cast grounds the film’s increasingly strange events in believable emotion, making the horror feel personal rather than distant. Fear isn’t just expressed through screams or panic, but through silence, hesitation, and the subtle unraveling of characters who are clearly out of their depth. That emotional realism keeps the audience invested even as the story ventures into more surreal territory.

Visually, the film opts for restraint over spectacle. Cregger favors dimly lit interiors, empty hallways, and long, lingering shots that allow tension to build naturally. There is an almost oppressive stillness to many scenes, as if the film itself is hold-

ing its breath. This deliberate pacing may frustrate viewers expecting constant thrills, but it ultimately serves the story’s unsettling tone.

The sound design also plays a crucial role in shaping the film’s atmosphere. Instead of relying on loud musical stings, *Weapons* uses silence and ambient noise to create discomfort. Small sounds—a door creaking, distant footsteps, or a low hum—become unnerving in their own right. These choices reinforce the idea that something is always wrong, even when nothing is happening on screen.

By the time the credits roll, *Weapons* leaves viewers with more questions than answers, and that ambiguity feels intentional. Rather than neatly tying everything together, the film lingers in the mind, encouraging post-viewing discussion and interpretation. It’s the kind of horror that doesn’t fade once the lights come back on, cementing *Weapons* as a bold and memorable entry in modern genre filmmaking.

Impact on Future Horror

Movies like *Weapons* could signal a shift in the horror genre, one where atmosphere, narrative experimentation, and psychological tension take precedence over formulaic scares.

By embracing ambiguity and emotional horror, *Weapons* challenges audiences to think as much as they feel, proving that true fear doesn’t always come from what jumps out at you, but from what quietly unsettles your mind.



Weapons movie poster (TNS)

Open Letter Sparks Debate Over Safety of Superintelligent AI

By Jose Baixauli

On Oct. 22, 2025, the Future of Life Institute, a nonprofit focused on reducing the risks of advanced technology, released an open letter calling for a pause on the development of superintelligent AI.

The letter has already gathered over 31,000 signatures, including Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, AI pioneers Geoffrey Hinton and Yoshua Bengio, and even former White House strategist Steve Bannon. With so many influential voices agreeing, it raises an important question: why are so many people signing this letter, and should we consider signing it too?

The goal of the letter is straightforward: halt the creation of superintelligent AI until clear and enforceable safety standards exist. As the letter states, "We call for a prohibition on the development of superintelligence, not lifted before there is broad scientific consensus that it will be done safely and controllably, and strong public buy-in."

The fact that such a statement is necessary is alarming on its own. It implies that the development of artificial intelligence has not been handled responsibly, and still isn't today.

The reason is, unfortunately, predictable: profit. Major tech companies are locked in a race to build the most advanced systems possible, even though none of them have a reliable plan for how to control these technologies once they surpass human intelligence.

Sam Altman, CEO of OpenAI, once admitted, "I think AI will probably lead to the end of the world, but in the meantime, some great companies will be created with some serious machine learning." When the person leading a top AI company openly says something like that, it should make everyone pause.

This debate goes far beyond tech politics. It affects all of us. Even in AI's current form, it's already shaping our everyday lives, influencing education, jobs, art, entertainment, and the information we see online. Without oversight, millions of jobs could be automated away, personal privacy could disappear entirely, and misinformation could spread faster than ever.

That doesn't mean AI is inherently bad. With careful regulation and real safety standards, AI could make life easier, safer, and more efficient. That's what makes this moment so

important: we're deciding not just how fast technology should evolve, but what kind of future we want to live in.

At Columbus, AI is not being ignored or treated as something to fear. Instead, the school has taken a balanced approach, teaching students how to use AI responsibly while still thinking for themselves. Teachers emphasize that AI can help with understanding ideas, organizing thoughts, or improving work, but it cannot replace original thinking or effort. The goal is not to ban the technology, but to prepare students to use it ethically in a world where it is becoming unavoidable.

Research supports this approach. A 2023 study from Stanford's Human Centered Artificial Intelligence Institute found that students using AI tools with clear guidelines and teacher oversight showed significant learning gains compared to those who did not use them. The study concluded that AI works best when it supports learning rather than replaces it. In many ways, that is exactly what Columbus is aiming to do: use AI as a tool, not a shortcut.

So does the open letter matter right now?

Honestly, it's hard to tell. AI development hasn't slowed down, and the letter hasn't forced any major changes, at least not yet. But what the letter represents is powerful. It shows that people are paying attention, concerned and demanding accountability.

Whether or not tech companies listen immediately, they can no longer pretend the world isn't watching.



EDITORIAL-The Lost Art of Freedom: Teen Driving

By The Log Staff

For many teenagers throughout the country, one of the most exciting parts of high school is receiving your very own car. Being handed keys doesn't just mean you can drive, it means you can drive anywhere and everywhere.

It's a rite of passage—you're now older and trusted by your parents in a way unlike before. It's a new feeling of freedom, a step forward toward becoming a full-fledged decision-making adult.

Yet, for many teenagers, driving is becoming less of a desire than it used to be. The idea of gaining independence and exploring places one's never been isn't as appealing as it once was.

In today's society, there's way less "I can't wait to get a car," and more, "My Uber's here, see you guys later." Teenagers are losing this "rite of passage" that is so pivotal to their development as human beings.

Aside from the obvious high cost of maintaining a car, another reason is the grueling, tedious process of getting a learner's permit. To list the criteria, teenagers are required to complete the four-hour-long Traffic Law and Substance Abuse Education course, get parental consent and pass the general knowledge and vi-

sion/hearing exams.

As if that weren't enough, a new Florida law that took effect on July 1, 2025, has now decided to replace the four-hour-long course with a six-hour-long driver's education course, lengthening the process toward acquiring a learner's permit.

Legislators justified their passing of the bill with statistics coming from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety showing the crash rate of teenagers being 4 times greater than that of drivers over 20 per mile driven.

But forcing teens to sit for six hours to "learn" doesn't make them safer; it just makes them not want to apply for a permit in the first place. Not to mention, a majority of teenagers leave the lessons on as background noise as they do other, more entertaining activities.

A demographic report from the Federal Highway Administration shows that in 2021, only 60% of Americans had a driver's license compared to the 80% seen in 1983. In that same report, Florida was one of only eight other states that had seen a 20% decrease in drivers aged 19 and younger between 2012 and 2022. After the passing of this new law, these numbers will unlikely lev-

el out anytime soon.

What does this ultimately mean, though?

Well, with the less likely future of our nation is to achieve traditional teenage milestones such as driving, the less autonomous skills they develop going into adulthood. A larger reliance on Uber, Lyft and technology in general is beginning to pose a larger problem to the youth of America.

The exponential growth of AI language models like ChatGPT poses questions on the authenticity of a diploma and only grows concerns over present-day teenagers' ability to tackle real-world problems in the future, rather than feeling comfortable delegating them.

This conformity to having things done for us is ultimately hurting the values of independence and curiosity that once defined American youth. It likely contributes to teenagers' consideration of going through a process to earn something they may never use.

Why feel the need to exert your own energy to go somewhere or think of something when your own chauffeur and personal Google are a couple of clicks away?

Sure, sitting behind a wheel doesn't exactly seem like it can really be that impactful with the rest that is being said here, but it is that exact mindset that is leading kids and parents alike to not place such a large emphasis on things as "unimportant" as driving.

On the contrary, in a world where everything is aimed at facilitating our lives, some skills are just too important not to be learned, and abandoning them will not only lose a part of what it means to grow up, it'll also cause unforeseeable harm to the youth of today and tomorrow.



Opinion

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Spotify Wrapped 2025 Brings New Features

By Jose Espejo

Every December, Spotify Wrapped takes over social media as millions of listeners share the personal music trends that defined their year. This year, Spotify has doubled down on customization and interactivity, making this year's Wrapped the most creative and most entertaining edition yet.

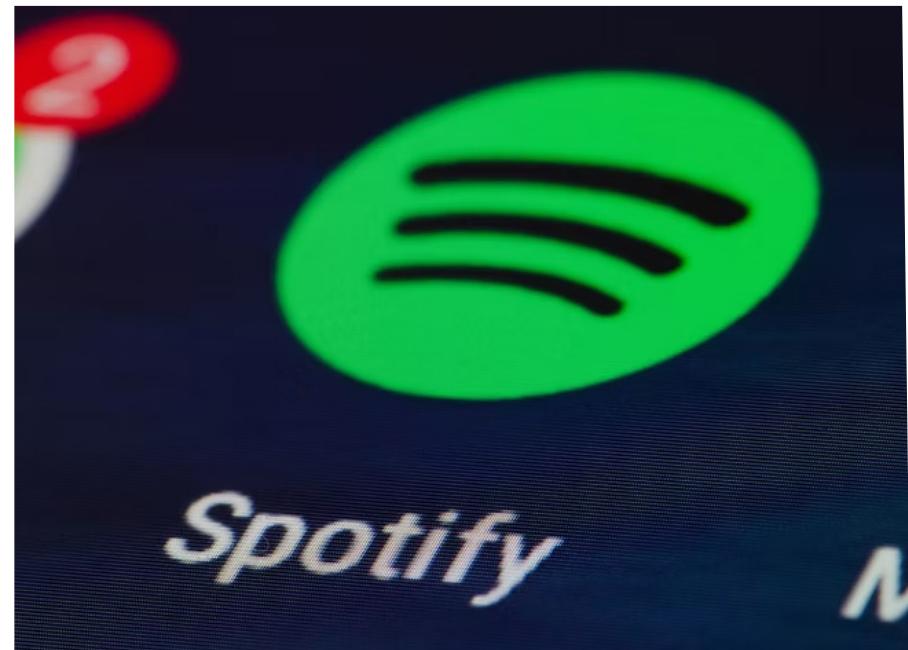
The biggest new feature is the "Fan Leaderboard," a leaderboard showing where you stand amongst your top artist's biggest fans. As always, it shows you how much time you spent listening to this artist and gives you a percentage. I spent 564 minutes listening to my top artist, putting me in the top 2% of their fans. If you're at the very top, it will put you in the fan leaderboard. Students have especially loved this update because it feels more personal.

Another major update in this year's Spotify Wrapped is the "Listening Age," an estimated age range for your music taste. This new feature was especially enjoyed by the students. A student poll said that 60% of students noted the listening age was their favorite new feature. While it

may not have been the biggest feature, I think it's safe to say it was the favorite.

As always, Wrapped still includes the classics: top artists, top songs, minutes listened, and the "music personality," a playful label that tries to summarize your overall vibe as a listener.

With all these new features, Spotify Wrapped 2025 feels less like a data report and more like a digital scrapbook of the year. Whether your Wrapped exposed your hidden taste or confirmed your status as your friend group's music expert, this year's edition once again turned everyone's listening habits into a celebration worth sharing.



Spotify logo (TNS)

Letter from the Editor

It is with great pride and pleasure that I present to you the second edition of The Log for this year. As we move into a new year, it is easy to get caught up in the bustle of everyday life and forget the things we, both individually and as a school, have accomplished. Flipping through the pages of this edition will hopefully provide you with a "highlight reel" not only of the spectacular writing, editing and design of our members, but also of the tremendous feats we have accomplished as a school. From alumni like Fernando Mendoza bringing home the most prestigious player award in college football, the Heisman Trophy, to our very own J.P. Pina writing his own book, the creativity and individuality—combined with the togetherness of Columbus—are present and thriving.

As the year moves on under the leadership of Mr. Busatto, I have noticed our members' skills in journalism have improved drastically. As a publication, I am proud to announce that we brought home an "All Florida" evaluation from the Florida Scholastic Press Association, the highest ranking in the state. I say this not to

boast or seek praise, but rather to paint a picture of the journey all members of our publication—from freshmen to seniors—have gone through in order to put out the best work possible.

The ability to put all this talent and hard work into a paper and make it enjoyable and clean for the reader could certainly not have been done without the work of the lead designer, Roberto Echeverri. Despite stepping into this role for the first time, his tireless pursuit of perfection and determination to make this paper possible cannot go unnoticed. For the officers, and particularly the managing editor, Allan Tompkins, I thank you for your assistance in collecting the articles and putting this paper together, and I hope to continue to improve the paper with your assistance. And most of all, to Mr. Bussatto, who has provided this publication—and the writers and editors that compose it—with unwavering support and guidance in journalism that has not only made us better writers and editors, but more importantly, better men.

Continuing in my role as editor in chief, I have learned a great deal this year. In helping others find their true

voice in writing while also striving to put out a strong product, it has been an incredible experience for me and, hopefully, for those around me as well.

Though not all of us share the same skills or interests in writing about the same topics, I am proud of the community we have built within The Log and believe that diversity in perspectives and interests leads to great journalism and a great publication as a whole. After all, not everyone is interested in reading the same things, and in writing, the ability to forge even one connection with a reader who is interested in what you have to say makes it worthwhile.

It is my sincere hope that you enjoy this issue.

Adelante,

Alejandro Menendez

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