

A Quarter in Review



Thomas Abraham '71 meeting with Pope Leo XIV, Credit: The Abraham Group

Thomas Abraham '71 Represents Columbus Spirit in Meeting With the Pope

By Ale Menendez

Getting the opportunity to meet the pope is, in itself, a once-in-a-lifetime experience for any Catholic. But presenting him with pieces of art, discussing peace in current global issues, and even showing him a Columbus hat are things that only alumnus Thomas Abraham '71 would think to do when presented with this opportunity.

Background

A member of the Christopher Columbus Hall of Fame, Abraham was a photographer for the high school yearbook, ran cross country and track, and ran for student council at the school. After this, he attended the University of Denver but decided to come back to Florida prior to graduating. This was because he was given the opportunity to be the youngest Chevrolet dealer in the country.

Continue reading pg 9

Columbus swimmers aim for state title after midseason success

By Oscar Pinto

As the swim season reaches the midpoint, Columbus has shown impressive progress in and out of the pool. With standout performances through transfers and improved times, the team looks like they are going to end the season strong.

Jan Carlos Hernandez said, "So far it has been good, we have a good record, and hopefully we will improve it throughout the final half of the season."

The team currently holds a record

of 7-1, and they are going to compete in Ocala on October 3, 2025

Daniel Forrero said, "I feel like it is going to be a competition I can dominate in and should not be too much to stress."

Standout Swimmers & Events:

David Guerra has been leading the team in 100 fly, swimming it at 55 seconds

Transfer Filippo Sidi has emerged as a key competitor in the 100 Free

Continue reading on pg. 7

A Look into Senior Year

By Marc Corteguera

With the start of school just behind us, freshmen here in Columbus have come in with plenty of questions. Luckily, the seniors have plenty of answers. Last week, we asked freshmen what was on their minds as they adjusted to high school life, and then turned to seniors for advice. From big questions to small questions, these inquiries were as curious as you'd expect, and the answers were as honest as the seniors could give. So, what do freshmen really want to know, and what wisdom do the seniors have to share? Let's

take a look.

Freshmen Questions

Senior Answers

If you could tell the freshmen version of yourself four years ago anything, what would you tell them?

- Aiden Artiles

I'd tell my freshman self that his first year grades are important, straight B's are not okay.

I'd also tell him that he's going to experience friendships and relationships that he never thought were

Continue reading pg. 10

From Lacrosse Fields to Bomb Detection: Mr. Leon Balances Two Worlds

By Oscar Pinto

At Christopher Columbus High School, familiar faces are not uncommon. Many teachers come back from college to teach and guide students to become a better version of themselves. Although Mr. Leon, a graduate from the class of 2009, is something special.

Mr. Leon connects with the kids in many different ways. He is not only a substitute teacher, but he is also a lacrosse coach, and for those who may

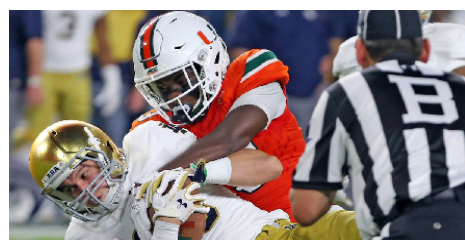
not know, he is an explosive detection canine handler.

Back at Columbus

Mr. Leon is a permanent substitute at Columbus, and he loves it just as much as the kids love him. He gets inspiration from the kids who salute him every step of the way, to the point that students want him to substitute for their class.

Continue reading on pg. 10

Catholics vs Convicts: How the Notre Dame - UM rivalry came to be.



Miami Hurricanes' DeeJay Dallas (13) tackles Notre Dame's Chris Finke (10) in the first quarter on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. (Charles Trainor Jr./Miami Herald/TNS)

By Mark Tanner

This Sunday, August 31, the University of Miami faces Notre Dame at Hard Rock Stadium to open the 2025 college football season. It will be the first time the two teams have met since 2017, when Miami routed the Irish 41-8.

Continue reading on pg. 7

Beach Bash: A Senior Tradition

By Ale Menendez

Senior Tradition

Dressing up in different color tie-dye shirts as part of a senior Beach Bash tradition, girls from St. Brendan, Lourdes, Carrollton and more, brightly represent what the event is all about.

“It’s one of the most important senior traditions to me, and I honestly really wanted to wear a tie-dye shirt,” said Lourdes senior Luna Turros.

That passion and sentimentality are what the seniors bring to Beach Bash. The fact that this tradition has lasted among visiting schools has inspired countless classes to continue displaying their pride through tie-dye.

The event has also proven to combat the inevitable feeling of running out of time with friends that all seniors seem to encounter as they prepare to head off to college in less than a year.

“I really want to spend as much time as I can left with my friends at both Lourdes and Columbus, and this event is a perfect opportunity for me to do that,” she continued.

When asked if Beach Bash was one of their favorite days of the year, students answered with a resounding yes.

“It’s something I always look forward to at the start of the year,” said Lourdes senior Sam Torrents. “It almost feels like the unofficial kickoff for the year and I really can’t believe it’s my last time.”

Despite the positivity surrounding the event, some had minor critiques.

“It does rain every single year,”



A picture of the crowd at Beach Bash. (Photo Credit: Br. Eladio)

said senior Krystle Pinero. “But that almost adds to the fun.”

The tradition, excitement and history that Beach Bash holds in the hearts of its attendees make it not only one of the most exciting events within Columbus, but one of the most memorable across Miami.

Columbus Represents

It’s not just girls from other schools who enjoy the event; it’s also an important tradition for Columbus seniors. While not necessarily rocking tie-dye like the girls, many Columbus students wore sports jerseys or class T-shirts to represent their school pride.

“It’s sort of like a last ride,” said senior Luqui Malabet. “You come to this event for four years in total but coming here as a senior feels kind of weird in a way, but it’s definitely a memorable experience.”

The Beach Bash experience would not have been as memorable without senior DJ Joe Fernandez, who was on the Big C platform throughout the

night.

When asked why he took on the role, Fernandez said, “I love music and I love this school. It really doesn’t get much better than being surrounded by your best friends and getting to do what you love.”

Providing students with a stage to be themselves and be surrounded by friends, all on their own high school campus, is at the very core of Beach Bash’s appeal. That uniqueness allows it to consistently draw a crowd every year.

Underclassmen

Despite the focus on senior traditions, it’s impossible to discuss Beach Bash without mentioning the role of underclassmen. From borderline safety-hazard mosh pits in the gym to some of the most competitive cornhole games in the L Building Lobby, underclassmen are the heartbeat of the event.

When asked why they came to the event, a group of freshmen shouted a simple, yet wise phrase: “Why not?!”

That attitude helps both underclassmen and upperclassmen enjoy the event so much. The freedom to let loose, be yourself and dance with friends at your own school may not be something other high school students experience. By creating this environment on campus, Columbus encourages students to feel free in their school setting and to learn how to responsibly have a good time.

Many Years to Come

It’s clear the mosh pits, cornhole games and food trucks of Beach Bash aren’t going anywhere. As excited underclassmen continue to fill the event and eventually embrace senior tradition, the flame of Beach Bash promises to burn strong on the Columbus campus and host good-natured fun for years to come.



Photo Credit: Br. Eladio



Photo Credit: Br. Eladio

A Taste of Spain at Columbus



The group of Columbus and Carrollton students posing with their partners and the flamenco teachers. (Photo Credit: Mrs. Alonso)

By Oscar Pinto

Columbus has hosted a salsa mixer with seniors from Our Lady of Lourdes Academy for the past few years. These types of mixers have drawn strong attendance from the senior class and have been in high demand.

Although this year there was a little bit of a switch-up, the Student Activities Committee decided to try something different: a mixer, but this time with Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart, another Catholic all-girls school in Miami.

“For the past few years, we’ve had a salsa mixer with Lourdes Academy, and it’s gone absolutely amazing,” said Mrs. Alonso, Student Activities Moderator and World Languages Department Leader. “We’ve also had a flamenco group come out to perform and even give a quick lesson to our students. It’s been fun, but I figured, hey, let’s change it up a little bit. The boys had been asking for more activities with Carrollton, so I thought it would be a great idea to incorporate them this year.”

Putting It Together

When organizing the event, steps had to be taken so the seniors could enjoy most of it. In previous years, Columbus has had a flamenco team perform for them at the school, so this year they had to find a bigger team that could teach the students how to dance flamenco.

“We’ve been using a particular team to perform for us for the past few years, recommended by Mrs. Nadia Kahn-Roberts. Since we

had a bigger group this year, she added someone to play the guitar as well. We worked together to plan the event: a short introduction to flamenco, a performance, and then an interactive lesson where the students could dance with their partners,” Mrs. Alonso said.

Not only was there a class being taught, but the SAC office also catered paella from D’Paella to really incorporate the Spanish theme.

The Environment

Students say it was fun, and it was a social environment where everyone felt included, and everyone had a good time. Just like the Salsa mixer, it’s an environment that no one should miss, Mrs. Alonso added.

“The atmosphere was fun, engaging, and very social. It was definitely a good time for everyone who was there,” she said.

Student Perspective

For students, it was a memorable and unique experience that they will never forget. It was a fun time combining with friends and making new

friends from Columbus and Carrollton

“Learning to dance flamenco was a very fun experience, especially because I was with my friends from Columbus and Carrollton. Even meeting some people I didn’t know while we ate lunch was a great time,” said senior Lucas Batalla.

By blending food, music, and dance, the mixer gave students a cultural experience alongside an opportunity to connect with one another.



Students waiting for the paella lunch. (Photo Credit: Mrs. Alonso)

The 2025 Club Fair Kicks off the Year

By Jose Baixauli

For students roaming the campus, it seemed like at every turn there was a poster board with passionate students trying to gather as many members as they could.

“There’s certainly a lot of people going around, and it’s so big because we have over 100 clubs... it’s certainly grown,” said Dr. Carter Burrus, who runs the Patriot Club.

With clubs as well as Honor Societies represented in the Cafeteria, 1st floor of the L Building, and Gym, the expansion of the club fair, and clubs in general at Columbus was on full display.

“In general, with the clubs, it’s kind of cool that every single year there are more and more clubs that are being offered. I’ve noticed that every year since my freshman year there are more unique, cool clubs that allow you to find whatever you want to do,” said Gonzalo Rodriguez ‘27.

Popular clubs among the student body, such as the Link and Key clubs, demonstrate the students’ desire to serve and give back to the community. This club fair is a deep dive into what CCHS is really about, whether that be the passion, community, or brotherhood it holds; it’s up to the students to figure out. There are over

100 clubs offered at the club fair, so all students can find a community of people who share similar interests.

“Honestly, we have so many clubs here. I mean, I’m actually so surprised at the fact that it’s 100 plus. I find that pretty insane for it being just a high school,” said Max Gonzalez ‘26.

Every club is run by a student or a group of students and a teacher moderator. Although the students have most of the responsibilities, they keep each club afloat, fostering community and friendship among the students. The responsibility also falls on the students to recruit club members.

And although participating and leading clubs at CCHS teaches both responsibility and hard work, it is the friendships and growing of the brotherhood that seem to have the most lasting impact on students who participate in these extracurriculars.

“I’m messing around with my friends when I’m trying to promote my club. You’re kind of killing two birds with one stone. You’re having fun hangouts with your friends on school property, but at the same time, you’re getting members for your club and you’re building more relationships with people, which I think is super cool,” Rodriguez said.



Mr. Pugh poses with students at the 2023 Club Fair. (Photo Credit: Br. Eladio)

Every club serves a purpose beyond just building friendships, too, like the Link and Key clubs that are oriented to being service clubs, the Honor Societies, which aim to help outstanding students get recognition on the national level, and the clubs that are aimed to help students become future leaders and entrepreneurs, like DECA and FBLA.

Overall, the club fair drew strong participation from students, with many finding a club that matched their interests.



iOS 26: Apple’s Biggest Update in Years

By Max Barrenechea

A Long-Awaited Update

Apple has officially released iOS 26, its biggest iPhone update since iOS 7 from over a decade ago. Instead of the usual minor changes that Apple is known for, this update makes some big improvements that you notice as soon as you turn on your phone. From the brand-new look of the screen to small quality-of-life features that save time and make life so much easier, iOS 26 is a massive step in the right direction for Apple.

Wait, Did We Skip a Few?

If you were wondering, wait, weren’t we just on iOS 18? How are we on iOS 26? Well, you do have a reason to be confused. At Apple’s annual developers conference, they announced that they would be skipping iOS 19 and jumping directly to iOS 26. They did this so that all of the Apple products would be on the same number for their software. If you’re still wondering why they jumped to 26, well that number isn’t random. They decided to make it so that their iOS number adds up with the year and they can add and update each year.

A Brand-New Look

The first thing you will notice when you turn on your phone is the bold new Liquid Glass design. Liquid Glass provides brand-new upgraded icons, with improved light and dark appearances and new tinted icons which provide a sleek and modern look to the home screen. Liquid Glass also adds new features to the lock screen, with customizable fonts and sizes for the clock and the major feature of 3D wallpapers that shift as you move your phone, creating a brand-new sense of depth.

“I like that they updated the Photos app design. Last year’s design was confusing,” said Mr. Larrubia, the computer science teacher, “Liquid Glass is cool. The animations and transitions are clean and fluid.”

Solving Everyday Problems

If you have ever been bothered by a scam call asking about your car’s extended warranty or a text promising you a fake new job opportunity, Apple has completely gotten rid of them with the brand-new Call and Message Screening. Apple now screens calls that look suspicious and waits for the person on the other end to give a name



Apple announces a new design language for its operating systems called “Liquid Glass” during the annual Apple “Worldwide Developers Conference” (WWDC) at Apple Park, the corporate headquarters of Apple Inc., in Cupertino, California on June 9, 2025. Pressure is on Apple to show it hasn’t lost its magic despite broken promises to ramp up iPhones with generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). (TNS Photos)

and reason and then Apple gives you the information and asks if you want to answer. Apple also added Hold Assist, which waits on hold for you and alerts you when a real person finally answers, meaning no more awful hold music.

“I hate scam calls, I’m always getting them and they are never anything useful. I didn’t know about the new thing and it’s actually something that’s useful,” said junior, Eduardo R. Gutierrez.

Tools for Students

Apple also added some more small but useful features for school life. Messages now have polls, which makes it easier to decide on fantasy punishments, meeting places, or even weekend plans. They also have a new Live Translation feature that works in

texts, calls and FaceTime, and translates any conversation you’re in to make conversing way easier. Also, with Adaptive Power Mode, iPhone batteries last even longer and can last the full school day without needing to be charged in the middle of a class.

The Bottom Line

From brand-new design to quality of tools, iOS 26 is more than just a typical Apple update that doesn’t improve much, it’s almost a complete refresh of how the iPhone looks and feels.

Columbus Celebrates Homecoming With Pep Rallies, Traditions and Dance

By Diego Rodriguez Deshon

At Christopher Columbus, Homecoming Week is a tradition that blends school spirit, brotherhood, and celebration. Every fall, the Student Activities Committee (SAC) leads a series of exciting events, creating a week filled with memorable moments. This year’s Homecoming dance, “A Festival of Lanterns”, embraces Chinese culture and brings vibrant colors and a beautiful atmosphere to the celebration.

Spirit Week

The kickoff to Homecoming at Christopher Columbus always starts with Spirit Week. A week full of exciting events that includes games and pep rallies involving students and staff.. This year’s Spirit Week started strong with the fall sports pep rally that energized students ahead of the upcoming games.. Throughout the week, students had the opportunity to express themselves through different themes. For example, on ‘When I Grow Up Day’, you could see the variety of different careers that students want to be in the near future.

“Spirit Week showed me the true culture of Columbus,” said freshman Liam Sesin

The game that everyone talks about, though, is the Senior vs. Faculty Dodgeball Game, which occurs every year in the gym. This is a tradition many students anticipate before graduation.. You are able to see teachers and students pelting balls at each other.

“The dodgeball game was a great way to connect with friends and compete against the faculty,” said senior Hunter Torres.

Thursday Night Lights

The biggest highlight of the week was Thursday’s annual homecoming football game. The Explorers had a shootout game against South Dade, winning 42-34 and acquiring their first win of the season. That’s not the only special event that happened



A picture of the DJ booth at the homecoming dance in Jungle Island. (Photo credit: Diego Rodriguez Deshon)

that night, though. Senior Jeremiah Cooper and Junior Christian Martinez were chosen to be this year’s Homecoming King and Prince. The anticipation for the results of the king and prince had added excitement to the week, marking a traditional event that ties back students from the past to the future.

“The Homecoming game was an amazing experience. Both the game and the fireworks were electric,” said sophomore Gabriel Barroso

SAC Leading the Way

The Student Activities Committee (SAC) organized the week’s events, from the pep rally to the homecoming dance. They helped set up all of the events that we all love and experience today. From the beginning of the Fall pep rally to the end of the Homecoming dance, we should appreciate how much time they put in for us.

“Our goal was to bring everyone together and have an unforgettable Homecoming week,” said junior Frank Tanda

The Dance

The week closed off with the dance we had all been anticipating. The dance was held at Jungle Island,

creating a beautiful scenery showing off Chinese Culture by instilling a traditional-looking atmosphere with vibrant colors lighting up the room. Everyone arrived that night looking sharp, just as Linfors would have wanted us to. The food was “mouth-watering” with options like churrasco, turkey, salad, bread and all types of dressings— and don’t get me started about the desserts.

“Homecoming was a really cool experience but also, the food was amazing,” said senior Lucas Batala.

Students described the night as memorable: music blasting, dates

dancing, and students screaming the lyrics of every song— the week had been such a success. Everyone was bonding and having the time of their lives. It was the exclamation point to a week filled with events.

“I had a great time at Hoco the food was great, the music was great, the vibes were here, tonight was the night,” said junior Jayden Borges



The winners of the homecoming court. (Picture credit: Axel Aubi)



The white team during their matchup against the other student team. (Photo Credit: Columbus Instagram)



The homecoming dance floor. (Photo Credit: SAC)

Columbus Annual Walkathon Rock Concert sends excitement throughout students

By Diego Rodriguez Deshon

The annual Rock Concert at Christopher Columbus High School featured performances from teachers and staff in a show that energized the student body.

As the bleachers filled with those who had purchased concert tickets, the band started playing “Seven Nation Army,” giving students a taste of what they were getting themselves into. Once the gym was full of students waiting for the concert to officially begin, Mr. Marinelli introduced the band after briefly hyping up the crowd.

The band then rushed in with their walkathon-themed Goku hats to show some school spirit. Mr. De Tuya then got into the crowd and instantly grabbed everyone’s attention to get the show started.

The concert opened with Mr. Jesurun and Mrs. Medico performing “APT,” an upbeat song that got everyone riled up for the beginning of the show. Medico brought out some moves for this song as she showed her passion for singing, while Jesurun was one of the cornerstones of the



A picture of the Faculty band (Photo Credit: Diego Rodriguez Deshon)

song’s harmony. The three guitarists — Cooper, De Tuya and Ulloa — showed strong chemistry throughout their performances. Not to forget the main beat from the band’s drummer, Mr. Santa Maria.

“There was lots of atmosphere and energy, first time I had ever seen something like this at school,” said freshman Eduardo Santacruz.

Following “APT,” Mr. Scholer and Mr. Moro brought classic rock to the table and sang “Go Johnny Go,” featuring Moro’s outstanding harmonica solo that really got the crowd going. Then, Crossman and Moro’s “Use Somebody” performance dove into a more emotional mood as the crowd turned on their lights to add to the heartfelt moment.

“Crossman’s performance felt super emotional and real. You could tell he got really into it,” said junior Rayan Riaz.

Mr. Moro and Mr. Chacon kept the rhythm going with “Don’t You (Forget About Me)” and continued to keep the crowd entertained. After their performance, the notorious mood riser Mr. Marinelli shook things up with “Higher,” having the crowd wave their hands side to side while enjoying Marinelli’s magnetic voice. The song “In the Air Tonight” drew one of the loudest reactions of the night, especially during the iconic drum break.

“I felt like Moro and Chacon were killing it out there, they made the show amazing,” said sophomore James Ordonez

With one of the last performances, Mr. O’Brien’s “I Will Survive” was easily one of the most hyped-up acts. Students chanting “OB! OB! OB!” made his performance one of the most memorable, showing the strong connection students had with Mr. O’Brien. After his act came to an end, Mr. Chacon and Mr. Marinelli’s electric “Basket Case” energized the entire gym, with students singing along and waving their hands.

For the finale, Mr. Ulloa and Mr. Jesurun took the stage to close the concert with “Welcome to the Black Parade.” The final song was as close to perfect as it could get—Ulloa passionately multitasking between singing and shredding the guitar was a visual that showed his love for music. The finale was emotional, loud, and perfectly fitting for a concert that celebrated talent, teamwork, and pure school spirit. When everything was finished, the band took a bow and was congratulated for their awesome performance.

“The combination of Jesurun’s voice and Ulloa’s shredding of the guitar was the perfect ending to the concert,” said Bryan Espinosa.

The concert, organized by the school’s faculty and music department, featured a mix of genres and showcased the community’s enthusiasm.

Letter from the Editor

It is with great pleasure that my peers and I present to you the first edition of The Log for the year. As many know, this edition will begin the second year with the return of the printed-out quarterly papers for The Log that were long lost before our prior editor-in-chief, Eddie Lopez, had the wonderful idea of bringing them back. Personally, I had doubts as to whether this paper would succeed among the student body and the Columbus world as a whole, but I am deeply glad that we made this return and have been able to once again place a physical copy of news in students’ and faculty’s hands that has hopefully allowed them to slow down in a world and school environment that is constantly speeding up.

The articles that you have read are the product of the hard work, creativity and passion that The Log writers and your fellow Columbus students have showcased while having to keep up with schoolwork and other activities that so often demand so much of us. It is the work and passion of these young men that is the lifeblood of The Log, and the publication would not be possible without them.

But along with this creativity and

writing comes the ability to put it into a paper and make it enjoyable and clean for the reader, and that could certainly not be 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.

Although we all have skills and passions for different areas, what I find beautiful about the passion of writing, as well as journalism, that these young men have showcased in this paper is its ability to showcase all others’ talents. Whether it’s articles about Columbus sports, events

or teachers, The Log stands to shine a light upon the Columbus community as a whole while giving student writers a chance to perfect their craft. And as I step into the role of editor-in-chief this year, I hope to shine this light brighter on Columbus as a whole and cultivate some incredible writers and journalists along the way. As Gandhi once said, “The sole aim of journalism should be service,” and I hope to perfect this service and be a greater benefit to the students, teachers and faculty of Columbus as a whole.

Thank you for taking the time to read this paper, and I hope that we have shined a sufficient light upon the great talents that this school and its students showcase every day.

Adelante,

Alejandro Menendez

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College GameDay Miami: Our Experience

By Mark Tanner & Allan Tompkins

ESPN’s College GameDay returned to the University of Miami on Saturday for the first time in eight years, drawing thousands of fans before sunrise as the Hurricanes’ undefeated start fueled national attention.

A combination of the hype, rarity and typical nature of the College GameDay environment led many fans to arrive at the University of Miami between three and four in the morning, committed to a long day of standing in a line for The Pit that curled around buildings.

From the beginning of the early morning, UM fans made it clear to any Florida Gator that they were far from home. Fans from UF had to go through the walk of shame toward the end of the line as boos echoed through the UM-dominated crowd. Nevertheless, the vibe and energy of the people were set very early on, despite how tired everyone was, making the rest of the day that much more exciting.

When entering The Pit, workers could be seen throwing Home Depot gloves and the traditional Home Depot helmets, which quickly ran out of stock and only added to the lively atmosphere. As soon as we got our spot inside The Pit, we felt the energy radiating and felt instantly gratified from the long and tedious three-hour

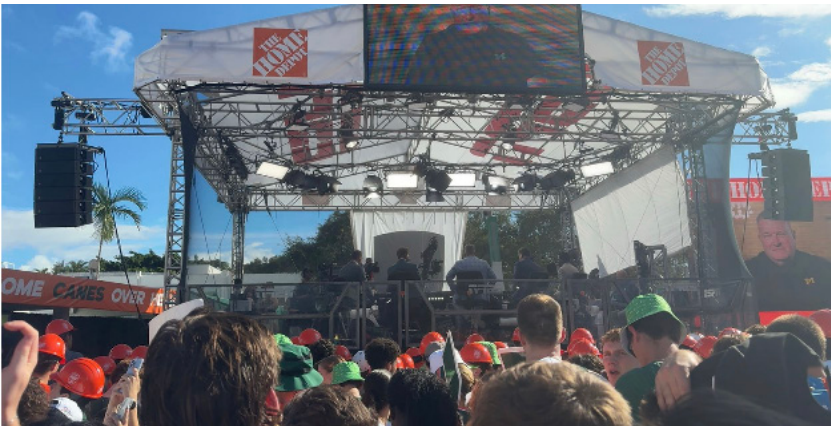


Photo Taken by Allan Tompkins

wait.

Fans were packed shoulder to shoulder, chanting and waving signs that mostly consisted of insults toward UF and especially emphasizing UF quarterback DJ Lagway’s five interceptions which had been thrown against LSU in Week 3. The Pit filled quickly, and soon enough, we were making friends with the people next to us who helped us slowly inch our way closer to the front of the crowd.

First of the announcers to come out was Desmond Howard, who began the broadcast and gave everyone an idea of how the rest of the day was going to look. Soon after came analyst Kirk Herbstreit, host Rece Davis and new analyst Nick Saban, whom the crowd went wild for. Yet, the man everyone was most excited to see was the one and only Pat McAfee, who most certainly lived up to all of the

hype through his sheer amount of energy that even surpassed that of the crowd.

Throughout the day, ESPN made sure to keep people entertained through competitions such as dance battles and costume competitions between fans of UM and UF. While the analysis portion of GameDay was fun to see live, the extreme heat and extended period of time without any water built intense anticipation for the segment everyone wanted to see: Pat McAfee’s Kicking Contest

A UM student from Maine was chosen and he ended up having his friend kick for him. McAfee wagered a lofty \$500,000 if the student made the kick, yet he completely sent the first one far left, bouncing off a building and leaving many people disappointed. However, McAfee decided to give him a second chance “for the

boys” and, while more accurately kicked, the student ultimately missed.

After the kick, all that was left for GameDay were the picks that were to be made by each analyst, plus special guest and Florida Panther right winger Matthew Tkachuk. Herbstreit, Davis, Howard, Saban and Tkachuk all chose UM to defeat UF while Pat McAfee chose a different approach to how he’d deliver his pick. Throughout the entirety of College GameDay, McAfee was eyeing the nearby UM diving boards that led into a refreshing pool.

Once it came to his choice, McAfee, who, by the end of the show, was sweating through his suit, got up from his chair and began walking over to the diving boards, climbing ladders to the top board while discussing Miami. While everyone was unsure who he would pick due to his tendency to go against the popular opinion, he cleared everything up once he stood on the edge of the diving board, stripped down to his underwear and said, “The U is back,” jumping off the board and pencil diving into the pool.

Ultimately, College GameDay at Miami was one to remember. From the early morning line-waiting to the climactic concluding dive, there never seemed to be a dull moment, which made the day that much better. While GameDay hadn’t come to Miami since 2017, UM’s current record of 4-0 is promising for a strong rest of the season, which may just be enough for the broadcast’s return in the near future.

An Eventful Opening: First Week in Columbus Football

By Jake Reed

Week one is officially over. Or is it? This week’s been one for the books. From lightning delays to a trip to Maryland, Columbus Football is being tested very early on.

A Never-Ending Start to the 2025 Football Season

The Explorers planned to take the field against Miami Southridge Thursday, August 21 at 4 p.m. The long-awaited opening to the season had fans and players pumped. Unfortunately, during stretches, Tropical Park began to rumble a little too much. There was a lightning warning.

This fall, Explorers’ fans anticipated the firepower-filled offense led by transfer quarterback Kingston Rust, a sophomore. On the very first drive, they made sure to get off on the right foot with running back Shawn James, a junior, punching in the first official score of the season. Southridge was unable to answer back due to a shutdown performance from our defense who forced a fumble.

Following the first drive, our offense struggled to find the footing they had acquired early on. After a

series of turnovers on offense, the defense was able to maintain ground for Columbus and keep the score at 7-0.

Suddenly, history repeated itself with another lightning warning. The game was rescheduled again and was to be finished on Monday, August 26. This time, Southridge came out with the momentum making the score 7-7 relatively quickly.

Fortunately, Rust was able to bounce back. He bypassed a difficult Southwest secondary and connected with sophomore wide receiver Bernard Cannon for a touchdown, while defensive backs D’Andre Ward and Tedrick Lee tightened coverage.

He’s beginning to prove that he can not only make plays from the pocket but also out on his feet. Rust led Columbus’s offense in rushing yards, and despite a very intense game with many collisions, he was able to get right back up.

Columbus offensive and defensive lines were starting to takeover the show, when—for the third time—lightning ended the game early. The game was stopped at 14-7 in the 3rd quarter and is to be resumed on Oc-

tober 6.

Despite the chaos, the Explorers found confidence in their performance “I love the energy and the way the team is playing. I think we have a lot to prove, and I’m really excited for what we can do this season,” says K/P John Allen, a junior.

The Test in Maryland

The Explorers packed their bags and headed out at 4 a.m to face national powerhouse Good Counsel. Columbus’s offense got off to a rough start, opening with two three-and-outs. Quarterback Chris Barrow was given an opportunity and gained some momentum, but it wasn’t enough.

Fortunately, on the other end, the defensive presence kept the action going. Barosela, Nua, Hall, and Rowell all delivered key stops and kept Columbus in the game. There was a back and forth between both teams for a while, but it resulted in a Good Counsel touchdown.

Right before halftime, Ivan Houston answered back with a touchdown, returning a blocked field goal kick from Angel Orozco. The score, 7-7 going into the next half, was unable



Credit: Columbus Instagram

to turn to Columbus’s favor. The Explorers’ offense was able to march into Good Counsel territory a few times, but never close enough for field goal range or a score.

With turnovers stalling our progress, the hosts were able to score another time, making the score 14-7. Despite final efforts from both ends of the ball, the Explorers were unable to answer, and Good Counsel held on to the win.

Moving Forward

Week one had some flashes of great potential. The lesson is clear: resilience. Between lightning delays, cross-country travel, and tough competition, Columbus is just warming up to the fight it will put forward this season. It’s still early on, but the Explorers have their sights set on a deep playoff run. The clean execution required of a winning season begins today at Tropical Park vs. Aquinas at 7 p.m.

Columbus swimmers aim for state title after midseason success

By Oscar Pinto

As the swim season reaches the midpoint, Columbus has shown impressive progress in and out of the pool. With standout performances through transfers and improved times, the team looks like they are going to end the season strong.

Jan Carlos Hernandez said, “So far it has been good, we have a good record, and hopefully we will improve it throughout the final half of the season.”

The team currently holds a record of 7-1, and they are going to compete in Ocala on October 3, 2025

Daniel Forrero said, “I feel like it is going to be a competition I can dominate in and should not be too much to stress.”

Standout Swimmers & Events:

David Guerra has been leading the team in 100 fly, swimming it at 55 seconds

Transfer Filippo Sidi has emerged as a key competitor in the 100 Free
Sophomore Marcel Cowey has



The 2025-2026 Christopher Columbus High School Swim Team poses for their team photo. (Source: Columbus website)

also had an impressive journey in the season, swimming in the 200 relay.

Water Polo and Swim Join Forces

The Water Polo team players have recently joined forces with the swim team, as the Water Polo players are skilled swimmers, they have joined the swim team to not only improve the Water Polo team’s swimming skills but to give the explorers a better shot at winning a state title in

swim this year.

Looking Ahead

The Columbus swim team looks to have a bright future, whether it’s in individual events or in relays. The explorers have something to prove this season, and it starts with their next meet, where the boys will have to travel up to Ocala to compete in the FAST Aquatics Center.

Francisco Vazquez said, “The season looks to have a good future and I think we can make it far in competition.”

This team truly displays the spirit of Brotherhood, with Water Polo players joining to help the swim team out, this combination of skills could push the team even further than their current 7-1 success. Only time will tell, but this team seems to be on track for great things.



Catholics vs Convicts: How the Notre Dame - UM rivalry came to be.

By Mark Tanner

This Sunday, August 31, the University of Miami faces Notre Dame at Hard Rock Stadium to open the 2025 college football season. It will be the first time the two teams have met since 2017, when Miami routed the Irish 41-8.

The rivalry began in the early 1980s, when Miami emerged as a rising powerhouse under coach Jimmy Johnson. The Hurricanes brought a sense of swagger and cockiness that no other team in college football had. They taunted opponents and embarrassed teams on the field. Notre Dame, in contrast, was tradition-heavy and disciplined. To the Irish, Miami represented everything wrong with college football.

In 1985, the Hurricanes humiliated Notre Dame in a 58-7 win, the worst loss in the Irish’s modern history. Notre Dame players believed Miami was running up the score to rub it in, adding fuel to the fire for the next meeting. Miami went on to beat them three times in a row, each time with the same swagger.

The Legendary Game

In 1988, No. 1 Miami traveled to No. 4 Notre Dame. Before the game, two Notre Dame students created a T-shirt with the words “Catholics vs. Convicts.” The slogan caught the attention of national media and became the lasting name of the rivalry.

Pregame tensions were high and boiled over in the tunnel, where a brawl broke out as both teams walked out. Security had to separate them. Before kickoff, Notre Dame coach Lou Holtz delivered one of his most famous speeches:

“Save Jimmy Johnson for me. Don’t talk it. Don’t fight it. Play it.”

Holtz wanted his players to prove they were better on the field, not off it. The game came down to the final seconds, but Miami fell short in a 31-30 loss. Notre Dame went on to win the national championship that season.

The rivalry only grew nastier from there.

1989: Miami ended Notre Dame’s 23-game win streak. After the game, Hurricanes players mocked the Irish on the field.

1990: Notre Dame fans pelted Miami’s team bus with snowballs before the game.

The Rivalry Now

By the mid-1990s, the rivalry cooled as Miami faced NCAA sanctions and Notre Dame’s dominance waned. Still, the battles of the 1980s created one of the most bitter, violent and hateful rivalries in college football. It was about more than wins and losses. It was about identity — two programs convinced the other represented everything wrong with the sport.

Player Stories



Miami Hurricanes' DeeJay Dallas (15) tackles Notre Dame's Chris Finke (10) in the first quarter on Saturday, November 11, 2017 at Hard Rock Stadium in Miami Gardens, Fla. (Charles Trainor Jr./Miami Herald/TNS)

The quotes below are from post-game press conferences.

UM quarterback Steve Walsh:

“We had no sympathy for them. They were Notre Dame, the program that got every break, every headline. If we had a chance to bury them, we buried them. Everywhere we went, people spit on us, threw stuff at us. We were the villains, and we loved it.”

Notre Dame defensive lineman Chris Zorich:

“They weren’t beating us. They were laughing at us, rubbing it in. That doesn’t go away. That sticks.”

Notre Dame linebacker Michael Stonebreaker:

“To us, they were thugs. Street guys who didn’t respect the game. We hated everything about them.”

Miami safety Bennie Blades:

“Notre Dame acted like they were better than everyone — better stu-

dents, better people. That was garbage. They broke the rules just like everyone else, but they judged us. That’s why we hated them.”

Notre Dame quarterback Tony Rice:

“Every play felt like life or death. You hit harder, you held longer, because you hated the guy across from you.”

Game Recap

On Sunday, August 31, both teams faced off in the opening week of college football. It was an exhilarating matchup with UM. dominating the whole game until the fourth quarter when Notre Dame tied it up 24-24. Miami came through in the final moments and won the game at the last seconds by a field goal making the final score 27-24. Miami is now ranked #5 and this could be the start to an amazing season for this Miami team.

Is parity the death of NBA Free Agency?

By Steven Rasco



Damian Lillard of the Portland Trail Blazers handles the ball against the Boston Celtics at TD Garden on March 8, 2023, in Boston. (Maddie Meyer/Getty Images/TNS)

Once upon a time, NBA free agency was a fan favorite in a league home to the world's finest in basketball. To some, it was the best part of the NBA, bringing forth much drama and change to the landscape of many teams, making free agency feel like a major factor in why the NBA is the best league in the world for its sport. In a long summer of no games, it's supposed to bring the action that many fans are missing from their teams. It's supposed to bring a new feel, because in a forever-evolving game, the league must evolve too.

Parity, the state of being equal, is something that has been a point of emphasis with NBA Commissioner Adam Silver. This brings a new NBA champion every year. Since 2019, not a single team has gone back-to-back, six seasons, six different teams lifting the Larry O'Brien every year. The nature of free agency has changed — once known as a frantic period, now a shell of its past self.

The CBA

A major factor in the parity we see today in the NBA is the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Under the new CBA, every team can afford one true superstar — this is never in doubt. The issue lies in paying the second or third star of the team, due to the fear of front offices and owners of entering the second apron, where many penalties lie.

Let's take an example of this in the Boston Celtics. They were around \$20 million deep into the second

apron prior to the beginning of this offseason. After dominating in 2024 to win the championship, it didn't seem like much of an issue to have so many players on the payroll, as they seemed to be ready to repeat with how strong their team was. However, with the injury of Jayson Tatum, their 1A superstar, their highest-paid player, everything came tumbling down. Since his injury, the Celtics have sent out Jrue Holiday and Kristaps Porzingis, two important pieces to their 2024 championship. They also let both Luke Kornet, a valuable backup center, and Al Horford, a franchise legend, walk in free agency. The best player they got in return? Anfernee Simons, a young player but not considered valuable for winning and not proven yet.

The new CBA puts any team great enough to win it all in a box, trapped into making tough decisions like cutting or shipping key players just to shed some money.

How does this play into the Free Agency?

A superstar that stays with their team will get a much bigger contract than one that leaves in free agency. This is because those teams have the ability to give the supermax contract — a long-term contract for more than enough money for the player. With more teams feeling they have a chance every year, it means teams are more willing to buy into their players, restricting the action of free agency.

With teams that won one year and

then fail the next, they likely already bought into their players after winning it all, so the only way to change up the roster — whether to save money or simply to shake it up — is to trade. This will rarely happen during the offseason, however, as most front offices would rather do it at the deadline if they don't see that championship potential. If done during the offseason, it'll rarely be those big-name players, as under the new CBA teams know how hard and valuable it is to have a superstar.

This new version of the NBA with parity and no dynasties is to help the little guy — the small-market teams, the Washington Wizards, the Portland Trail Blazers of the league. With organizations like these seemingly tired of being pushed around by the large-market teams like Los Angeles or Miami in trade and free agency discussions, it's clear the new CBA was a way to respond to this issue. It helps these smaller teams have the same power to retain stars as large markets.

Is parity a recipe for success?

To look into what parity generates for the league, one must look at the NBA Finals ratings and viewership. Looking at the last six years, the Finals has generated an average of about 10 million viewers. Now compare that to 2012-19, a time much different than today's parity, with dynasties and large-market teams dominating. The average viewership was around 18 million, with a peak of 30

million viewers in the widely admired 2016 Game 7 between the Cavaliers and Warriors.

This past Finals — the Pacers vs. the Thunder, two small-market teams, both young and lacking that global superstar recognition — even with it being a great Finals matchup that went seven games, ended up being yet another part of the trend of decline in viewership, with the third-lowest in the last six years. This just goes to show that fans don't care for seeing teams do it "the right way." They want to see drama, rumors and competitiveness in free agency. They want to see change. They want to see new faces on new teams, not new teams in a new light every year.

The era of dynasties may be at a stop for now, with the new NBA steering toward trying to make every team equal, in a reality where they are not. The parity may very well change not only free agency but also the landscape of the league as we know it.



Thomas Abraham '71 Represents Columbus Spirit in Meeting With the Pope

By Ale Menendez

Getting the opportunity to meet the Pope is, in itself, a once-in-a-lifetime experience for any Catholic. But presenting him with pieces of art, discussing peace in current global issues, and even showing him a Columbus hat are things that only alumnus Thomas Abraham '71 would think to do when presented with this opportunity.

Background

A member of the Christopher Columbus Hall of Fame, Abraham was a photographer for the high school yearbook, ran cross country and track, and ran for student council at the school. After this, he attended the University of Denver but decided to come back to Florida prior to graduating. This was because he was given the opportunity to be the youngest Chevrolet dealer in the country.

"I grew up in a very entrepreneurial environment," says Abraham. "I was learning constantly about just how many opportunities there are."

After making the decision to sell the dealerships, Abraham took this entrepreneurial spirit and ran with it. Starting up different finance and technology companies, Abraham now serves as the president and partner in several of his family businesses.

Constantly shifting career paths and ending up being in charge of several successful companies, one has to wonder if Abraham has any time to think about things outside of his business. However, he still finds a way to put charity above even his business endeavors.

Giving Back

Serving as chairman of the Anthony R. Abraham Foundation, Abraham has continued the legacy of his parents, who founded the organization in 1976.

"Our focus with the foundation is to empower those local institutions that we believe are empowering and giving hope to the needy in our community," says Abraham. "Part of our commitment is also to give back to Lebanon. My parents were Lebanese American, and I even speak Arabic and Lebanese, so that's a big part of our focus as well."

Abraham also funded the building of the Columbus Chapel in honor of his mother, Genevieve Abraham, which has provided students with opportunities to interact with God and served as the meeting place for spiritual programs such as Marist Youth.

However, Abraham's commitment to positively impacting the lives of others doesn't stop there. As sports ambassador to the U.S. Blind Soccer Team, which will compete in the 2028 Olympics, he hopes to implement



Thomas Abraham meeting with Pope Leo XIV, Credit :The Abraham Group



blind soccer not only at the professional level but even in high schools for kids who aren't blind.

"My hope for implementing blind soccer throughout high schools is that it will teach kids the value of Paralympic sports, and that when they see someone who is disabled they will not only appreciate the challenges they are faced with, but even be able to see them as a competitor in Paralympic sports."

The name of this course will be "Beyond Vision: Championing the Unseen" and will have schools across not only Miami-Dade but the country participating in blind soccer in order to gain appreciation for their athletic abilities while gaining a better understanding of the challenges that others face.

"Columbus gave me the opportunity to go to a school that challenged your mindset about who you are and what you can become. I think every different student that goes there brings a different value, and the school is the catalyst to push that value."

This "uplifting spirit" that Columbus gave Abraham is part of the reason he continues to uplift the students, communities, and even countries around the world.

With countless additional organizations, Abraham's approach to charity is focused and intentional, ensuring that he champions the or-

ganizations that are truly making an impact within their communities and allowing others to gain insight and appreciation for what they have been blessed with.

Meeting With the Pope

As an ambassador of the International Catholic Legislator Network, Abraham is constantly discussing religious issues around the globe and was presented with the opportunity last year to meet with Pope Francis.

"I presented him with the Columbus hat and the big C with my hand, though I'm not sure he totally understood it," says Abraham. "It was nonetheless a great experience."

At another more recent conference, Abraham was able to meet with the newly elected Pope Leo, where he had a more lengthy conversation discussing religious issues in Lebanon. Abraham actually presented the pope with a painting that he himself commissioned in order to spark change in his home country. Even crafting his own proposal, which has now been given to cardinals in Lebanon and even the Lebanese president, Abraham has sought to incite tangible change to help others with these once-in-a-lifetime interactions.

"Meeting the pope is like having the opportunity to embrace a time capsule," says Abraham. "Someone who is representative of Jesus and has such love for others real-

ly changes the way that you think about the world."

Raising continued awareness for the 2020 port explosion in Beirut that killed 241 people, Abraham discussed many different global topics in his interaction with Pope Leo.

Even having met with the queen of England in Brussels and discussing issues in Beirut, Abraham's interactions are constantly met with a focused purpose rather than simply allowing these opportunities to pass him by.

"When I meet somebody of this caliber I always try to embed something very special into the interaction and try to bring and do something special," says Abraham.

And in times when most would be faced with intimidation in the face of world leaders and idols, Abraham has kept his focus and charitable spirit and has therefore been able to turn these interactions into change.

Personal Experience

When asked why he chose to give Pope Leo a Columbus hat, Abraham replied,

"I saw an opportunity to positively represent my high school which has done so much for me, and so I took it. It's not really about a photo op for me, it's about what impact I can make in that short time and who I can highlight that's important."

After discussing many serious global religious and political issues, the chance to shout out Columbus as a Catholic institution that is doing good in the lives of young men and the community was what Abraham sought to do. Having the pope bless the hat that will be presented to Columbus in the near future, because of Abraham's presentation, the school has made it across the globe into the very hands that are representative of grace, love, and all that Columbus is trying to implement.

Specifically looking forward to this generation, Abraham is confident that both at Columbus and outside of it we have the opportunity to uplift others if we keep the right mindset.

"There's so much technology that enables us to do good, and I think this next generation is going to have the chance to use it for making change in the right areas," said Abraham.

And it's this spirit of constant grace and seizing of opportunities that everyone at Columbus and outside of it can take away from Abraham's interaction with the pope as well as how he lives his day-to-day life.

And though the pope is yet to throw up the C, Columbus can feel humbled and honored knowing that it is one of their alumni who chose to represent them while meeting with His Holiness, displaying the very grace, change, and forward-moving spirit that the school strives to build.

A Look into Senior Year

By Marc Corteguera

With the start of school just behind us, freshmen here in Columbus have come in with plenty of questions. Luckily, the seniors have plenty of answers. Last week, we asked freshmen what was on their minds as they adjusted to high school life, and then turned to seniors for advice. From big questions to small questions, these inquiries were as curious as you'd expect, and the answers were as honest as the seniors could give. So, what do freshmen really want to know, and what wisdom do the seniors have to share? Let's take a look.

Freshmen Questions Senior Answers

If you could tell the freshmen version of yourself four years ago anything, what would you tell them?

- Aiden Artiles

I'd tell my freshman self that his first year grades are important, straight B's are not okay.

I'd also tell him that he's going to experience friendships and relationships that he never thought were possible, and he's going to mature into a person that people love and depend on. High school is going to be what shapes your character, and it's all go-



ing to turn out okay.

- Adrian Perez

How do you balance school, sports, and hanging out with friends without getting stressed out?

- Leonel Martinez

Make time for each. So don't overcrowd yourself with work or extracurriculars, and give yourself time and room to do everything.

- Thomas Cruz

How was your high school experience as you became more involved in the brotherhood?

- Marco Diaz

As I got more involved in Columbus, I grew to meet new people, many from Columbus, but also many people from a whole bunch of schools. Not only this, but the further I went

into Columbus, the more I learned about responsibility and playing as a team.

- William Zayas

As a senior, what would be your advice to all freshmen here in Columbus?

- Cyrus Alba

Join a club, any club. Just find out what you like and what you don't like to do, if you don't know already, also helps with making new friends. Also, go to Beach Bash at least once.

- Christopher Gonzalez

What's it like knowing this is your last year in Columbus and that this is the last year you'll be able to see your brothers every day?

- Eason Brohee

So this is my last year, and I'm re-

ally excited for what this year has to hold. Even though I won't be able to see my brothers every single day, we are going to stay in contact. We have already mentioned this, and we cannot wait to see how our lives shape in the future and to see that brotherhood in action outside of Columbus's walls.

- Brandon Pineyro

From Lacrosse Fields to Bomb Detection: Mr. Leon Balances Two Worlds

By Oscar Pinto

At Christopher Columbus High School, familiar faces are not uncommon. Many teachers come back from college to teach and guide students to become a better version of themselves. Although Mr. Leon, a graduate from the class of 2009, is something special.

Mr. Leon connects with the kids in many different ways. He is not only a substitute teacher, but he is also a lacrosse coach, and for those who may not know, he is an explosive detection canine handler.

Back at Columbus

Mr. Leon is a permanent substitute at Columbus, and he loves it just as much as the kids love him. He gets inspiration from the kids who salute him every step of the way, to the point that students want him to substitute for their class.

"They say, 'Hey, what's up, Mr. Leon? How's it going, Mr. Leon? When are you going to substitute our class again, Mr. Leon?' So that's really inspiring to me. I really like connecting with the kids."

Columbus has only a couple of little details that have changed, but

even though they are small details, he lived through those things throughout his journeys in Columbus.

"It feels the same, but a lot has changed. We were able to use lockers. But then again, you had to run between classes getting books and stuff, so you don't see that anymore. But man, even the food's the same at Columbus."

Not only do the students enjoy his return to Columbus, but the staff also believes his return is amazing and inspiring, to give back to the school that gave him a lot when he was part of it.

"I think it's amazing to watch somebody like Mr. Leon come back to Columbus and give back to the school that gave him so much when he was growing up," said Mrs. Insua, Columbus Dean of Faculty.

At Columbus, he also took over the role as not only a substitute teacher but as an assistant lacrosse coach. He is helping to develop the program and take it to the next level every day. Not only does he improve the program, he connects players and instills habits that make them not only better players but better young men.

"I think he does a really good job

keeping his energy very calm. And what that allows him to do is really connect with the players on a different level. It reinforces some of the habits that he's really trying to work with our guys on," said Lacrosse Coach Steven Hernandez.

While many look at substitutes as easy and an easy class, Mr. Leon has been in those shoes before.

"There's an old saying, 'Been there, done that.' So when you guys try to pull little tricks on the substitute and things like that, I already know where it's going. I've been there. I've done that. It's great to guide them and try to help them avoid mistakes that I made when I was in school."

Beyond the Classroom

What many of his students and athletes do not know is that he is also an explosive detection canine handler, which means he teaches canines how to detect explosives at the Port of Miami.

Mr. Leon has a big responsibility that relies not only on the safety of the people but the safety of the nation.

"I got my dog the first time I went out with the job, and they told me, 'Hey, just make sure no bombs get through.' It's a very light sentence,



but it's a very heavy burden."

When teaching and training these K9s, it's not an easy task. It is like training any animal, it relies on consistent reinforcement and it's what helps them truly grasp what you're trying to teach.

He says, "When training animals, it's that reinforcement of habits that allows them to really pick up what you're trying to teach. And at the end of the day, when you translate that to the lacrosse field, it's about reinforcement, consistency, and hammering the points. And I think Peter is one of the best at doing that."

Whether he's mentoring students, building better athletes, or ensuring safety through his work with K9s, Mr. Leon approaches every challenge with the same mindset: discipline, consistency, and care. His story embodies the values that make Columbus what it is today.

Francisco Vazquez: Playing for a Higher Purpose

By Oscar Pinto

For most athletes, the decision to choose a high school often comes down to a balance between sports and academics. For sophomore Francisco Vazquez, it comes down to more than just academics and sports. It came down to the core of his life: faith.

“My biggest role model is God,” said Francisco.

Francisco spent his last year of middle school at St. Timothys Catholic School, after spending most of his time in the public school system. For him, the opportunity to attend Columbus wasn’t in his path, but it was put by God.

“Coming from a humble family, I always went to public school, and I never knew what Columbus was,” he said. “In my eighth-grade year, God decided to put me in a private school, St. Timothy, and that was when I found out what Columbus was.”

But his decision ultimately went beyond his faith. The other motive was his favorite sport: water polo.

“I chose Columbus over any other school because most of my friends were coming here for water polo, and also because of the religious service that Columbus provides,” Francisco said.

Still, Francisco’s path was not handed to him. To earn his place at Columbus, he had to prove himself on the team while also completing summer school. He believes God allowed him to attend Columbus, but it came with the work and discipline needed to shape him into the man he is today, starting with his sport.

Freshman Water Polo

Francisco’s first water polo season at Columbus was not easy. Coaches said Francisco was given senior-level responsibility due to his experience. The pressure, he says, contributed to a rough start at the beginning of last season.

“My performance last season had a rough start, but with time, I gained more confidence and ended up being one of the top five players on the team,” said Francisco

Overall, Columbus finished a solid season, winning first place in the district, beating the undefeated ex-district champions Gulliver Prep, where Francisco ended up scoring the winning goal to secure Columbus the win.

But for Francisco, faith has always been intertwined with his life.

“Always before the game, I like to say a quote from a baseball player who is a devout Catholic, and I like to add to it with this prayer: ‘Dear God, take this, it’s a tough matchup. Just try to have fun. You take the shots, you take the passes, and most importantly, keep

me safe, and let’s make this game great,’” he said. “That day, he did. He slotted my backhand right under the goalie’s arm.”

Francisco finished with 32 goals and 18 assists, contributing to more than 50 scores this season. Francisco averaged 2 goals per game and had over 10 steals this season.

The program had a record-breaking season, winning the Greater Miami Athletic Conference (GMAC) championship for the first time in school history. The team clinched a final win against MAST Academy in the GMAC championship and a win against Gulliver in districts.

Junior Olympics

And his dedication to water polo carried into the summer.

Francisco’s dedication to water polo continued with preparation for the Junior Olympics. The Junior Olympics is one of the largest water polo tournaments in the country, where top teams compete.

Before playing in Junior Olympics, Francisco endured a hard and rigorous training schedule throughout the summer, lifting every Monday and Wednesday at the gym at 9-11 a.m., paired with afternoon practice every day from 5-8. Every week, Francisco was training over 20 hours weekly to prepare for the Junior Olympics.

“Hard work in the gym and full dedication to swimming and technique allowed me to play to my 110% at Junior Olympics,” he said

Francisco played with Gladiators, a club team composed of Columbus players, where Francisco had the chance to prove himself against some of the best players in the country. Supporters noted his success came not just from hard work but also talent.

Francisco said, “God just gave me the strength to overcome their playstyle and allowed me to be probably the most dominant Whole Set in the tournament.”

His mother, one of the most important people in his life, was more than proud, but at the same time, she was surprised after seeing the competition her son had to deal with, playing against some of the best players in the country, and winning a national tournament is not the easiest.

“When he received the MVP award, I wasn’t aware of what they were giving him due to my lack of knowledge. I realized it was something great, because everyone was very happy. I also thought... many others have played like him, and that’s why I didn’t visualize it, and without a doubt, all for the glory of God.” Heidi Vazquez said

In the finals, it was the team’s most complicated game, where individual



Water Polo Team at Junior Olympics (Photo Credit: Oscar Pinto)



Francisco winning at the Marist Achievement award ceremony. (Photo Credit: Columbus Water Polo)

talent had to stand out. This is where Francisco played the biggest role in the final, leading the team in scoring four goals, which led to the Gladiators’ final push to become Junior Olympic Champions.

Coach Manolo

If there was one person who was responsible for Francisco’s success, it would be his coach and mentor, Manolo. Coach Manolo guided Francisco through many difficulties in life and in the sport. Manolo has been a big influence on Francisco.

Francisco said, “Manolo has been a great coach and has allowed me to participate in many tournaments, and I’ve seen an increase in my ability...So it’s a big thank you for Manolo.”

Manolo taught Francisco great life lessons. One of the greatest lessons Francisco learned from Manolo and uses in his day-to-day life was to accept and to get better the next time something happens.

“He’s taught me to be calm and accept whatever it is that’s happening and be better whenever the time comes around again,” Francisco said.

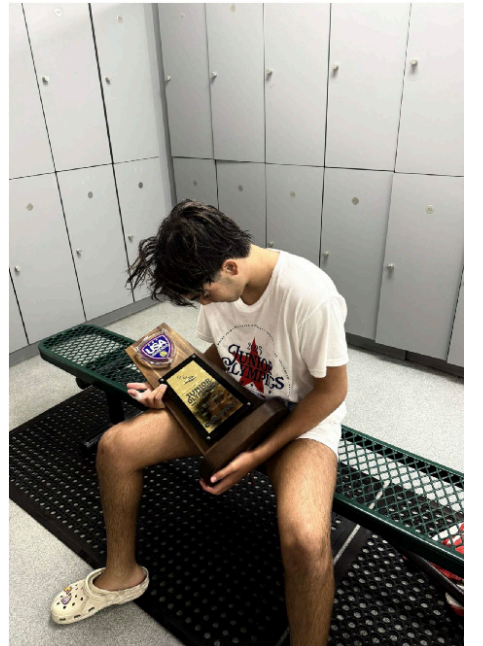
Manolo’s guidance, Francisco said, helped him achieve success. He is in the process of making school history, hopefully bringing the school its first water polo state championship.

Faith

Faith is part of Francisco’s core. It’s what drives him to be better every day and to grow every day. According to Francisco, God has shaped his journey as a water polo player.

“My faith has brought me a long way throughout my time playing water polo. Whenever I score a goal or I make a play, I always point up with my finger and say “Thank you God” because it’s only He that allows me to do it,” he said.

God has also driven Francisco as a person, he says. With God at his core,



Francisco Vazquez admiring the Junior Olympics trophy. (Photo Credit: Oscar Pinto)

supporters describe Francisco as “unstoppable.”

Francisco said, “Yes, without God giving me strength, I don’t think I could be the person that I am.”

His main guide through religion is powered and taught by his Mother, who, since Francisco was very little, was gifted with the faith of God, and Francisco’s mother developed that faith in the holy spirit and God over time.

“Spirituality is something that people accept, but it is also something that the family develops. Francisco was born with the gift of spirituality, and his grandmother realized it over time and developed it,” Heidi said.

The Future

This season at Columbus is going to be a little more complicated, Francisco says. Columbus is going to be playing with two seniors, and the team is mostly composed of Juniors and Sophomores, which at the high school level is a big difference in playing players who are two to three years older.

“It’s going to be rough this year, but I think we can do better than last year,” Francisco said.

Francisco is playing at a very high level for only being a sophomore who just turned 15. Francisco has a great chance of playing at the college level with D1 schools, which is a big dream of his in water polo.

He said, “I do see myself playing at the college level. If I keep working hard and putting my full commitment to water polo, I think I can make it really far.”

But despite his athletic ability, he still credits his progress to where God takes him.

“I think I can go pretty far in my water polo career wherever God takes me. That’s where I’m going,” he said.

Dr. Bart Everton M.D.

By Alejandro Menendez

Dr. Bart Everton, M.D., was not especially good at anything. In fact, if anything, he was slightly below average. His placing in the 46th percentile on his Scholastic Aptitude Test in the 11th grade had created a disdain for statistics and numbers that lasted him the rest of his life and did not necessarily assist him in medical school or medical practice.

Dr. Bart Everton, M.D., got in around the same time every day to work in his beat-up red Camaro, and he drank the same cup of coffee out of a cup that said, “An apple a day keeps the doctor away, so don’t eat apples,” and he saw the same few patients and handled them with ease. Then he went home to his same old wife, a slightly below average-looking woman whom he detested but justified his marriage to, as he knew subconsciously he couldn’t do much better.

Dr. Bart Everton M.D. had had enough. It was sometime in between his monotonous drive to work, where he would yell profanities at the driver (this he was not below average at), and the time that he had finished checking out the last patient that he remembered his mother’s recipe for hamburgers and subsequently grew depressed at the monotonous and disparagingly average life he had decided to live. As he stared at the posters in his office that contained food pyramids and other drudgerous state-

ments that his patients would glance at, he threw the coffee from his cup at them and walked out of the office.

Ms. Tina, the high school receptionist, asked, “Where are you going, doctor?”

“I’m leaving,” replied Dr. Bart Everton, M.D.

“Why,” she said.

He was already out the door.

...

It took some time, but Dr. Bart Everton had eventually perfected his late mother’s hamburger, which was something he thought was traditionally American, but he realized after searching through a few cookbooks that the Americans had taken it from the Germans. (The Americans had taken a lot from everyone.) And after taking out the last \$14,562 that was left to him by his mother and father, he opened up a simple food truck in a green patch of grass in one of the lesser neighborhoods in Witcham County, Missouri. He felt fulfilled. He felt rebellious. He felt for the first time that the 46th percentile he belonged to did not define him; this being because he had thrown his scores out the window.

On the first day of “Everton’s Excellent Burgers Food Truck’s” debut in Witcham County, Missouri, many of the other food truck owners looked upon the truck with disdain. They were all of an older crew who had the system of customers worked out to

where they all made their fair share and were decently well-off. Dr. Bart Everton, M.D., did not care about this, because his burgers were different.

You see, when one goes to medical school at a prestigious institution such as Southern Missouri State (as Dr. Bart Everton, M.D.), one learns certain things. In his senior thesis, Everton had discovered a rather interesting combination of chemicals that caused the six senses of each individual to be reduced to almost nothing.

Nothing.

One could not see too well, nor hear too well, nor touch too well, nor smell too well, and most importantly one could not taste too well. Dr. Bart Everton, M.D., would use this to his advantage.

...

The first customer was a short, brown, curly-haired young man who realized Everton’s stand was the only one with cheap enough prices for his \$8.50. After an awkward exchange the customer bit into the burger and told Dr. Bart Everton, M.D., “That may be the most average burger I’ve ever tasted.”

“I know,” Everton replied.

For the first time in months, he smiled.

However, the day after, the boy returned, this time with a few bruises on his head. He ordered another burger.

Soon enough, the town of Wit-

cham County, Missouri, was invaded by Dr. Bart Everton’s average burgers. The effects were disgraceful, to say the least. People were run over by buses for lack of sight, burned themselves in the kitchen for lack of touch, and worst of all, kept eating Dr. Bart Everton’s burgers for lack of taste.

One lucky man who wrote for the Witcham Daily News was able to escape these burgers for his superior observance and lack of participation in general public events. He wrote a headline on the case. The headline said this:

Witcham Daily News

MEDIOCRITY DRAWS
THE MASSES;
THEN BLINDS THEM

The Sixth Mass Extinction Survival Guide

By Juan-Pablo Piña

Throughout its 4-billion-year history, life on Earth has faced five mass-death events called “The Five Mass Extinctions,” in which 50% or more of life disappeared rapidly. The most famous, the KP-g Extinction 66 million years ago, wiped out non-avian dinosaurs. Today, we face the Sixth Mass Extinction—and this time, we are the asteroid. Here’s what you need to know to survive and help stop it.

PART I. History

Life began around 4 billion years ago. About 500 million years ago, the Cambrian Explosion unleashed vast biodiversity. Roughly 100 million years later, the first mass extinction ended the Ordovician period, wiping out 60% of life due to rapid cooling that destroyed marine habitats. The Devonian period ended with an extinction caused by algal blooms, depleting oxygen and acidifying oceans, killing 96% of marine life.

Around 300 million years ago, during the Permian period, Pangea formed and mammal relatives emerged. About 250 million years ago, massive volcanic eruptions caused The Great Dying, killing 90% of life. Fifty million years later, the Triassic Extinction wiped out 76% of life, paving the way

for dinosaurs.

From 200 million to 66 million years ago, dinosaurs dominated, birds and marine reptiles thrived, and flowering plants appeared. Then, 66 million years ago, an asteroid hit the Gulf of Mexico, triggering tsunamis, wildfires, and a non-radioactive “nuclear winter,” killing 65% of life, including non-avian dinosaurs, allowing mammals—and eventually humans—to rise.

Now, we face a Sixth Mass Extinction caused by humans, triggering chain reactions historically linked only to catastrophe.

PART II. The Thing That Should Not Be

Humans are not physically dominant, but our brains are. Early humans spread from Africa using fire, weapons, culture, and learning to hunt large animals and transition from hunter-gatherers to agriculture. The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions increased efficiency to the planet’s detriment.

Humans overfish, deforest, pollute, and farm excessively, drastically reducing wild animal populations. Since the 1950s, wild populations have dropped by over half, while climate change accelerates faster than past extinction events. Summer sea ice has decreased by 40%, and species vanish at rates unseen since the KP-g event: 30,000 species per year, 82 per day, four per hour.

Unchecked, this will worsen: by the 2030s, the Amazon may become a savanna; the Arctic could be ice-free in summer. By the 2040s, thawing permafrost will release methane. By the 2050s, oceans will heat and acidify, killing coral and fish. By 2080, soil degradation and pollinator loss will threaten food production. By 2100, a 4°C warmer planet could make vast areas uninhabitable, collapse ecosystems, and displace millions.

PART III. Survival

Location is critical: high ground, northern forests, highlands, and natural springs offer resources and shelter. Freshwater access is vital: rain-catchers, reservoirs, wells, or underground sources ensure supply. Climate-resilient crops—potatoes, beans, millet, fungi—are essential. Extreme weather—hurricanes, wildfires, heatwaves—will intensify.

Shelters should be low and resilient: earth berms, cobs, or underground bunkers. Community is equally important: tight-knit groups sharing knowledge and responsibilities improve survival odds. Key knowledge includes gardening, permaculture, foraging, water filtration, first aid, trauma care, construction, energy, off-grid tech, and conflict de-escalation. Staying informed about local ecology and geography is crucial.

PART IV. How To Win The Battle

This mass extinction is alive, greedy, but slayable. Ending short-term thinking, respecting science and history, and learning from the past are essential. Recovery is possible but requires independence and self-sufficiency—traits that allowed small, adaptable species to survive past extinctions. Humans are vulnerable unless we act.

Population control, sustainable living, and renewable energy are key to surviving the Sixth Mass Extinction. Japan shows that education and opportunity stabilize populations, while solar, wind, geothermal, and nuclear power can meet global needs without increasing impact. Healthy oceans and forests are essential allies: whales fertilize phytoplankton, protected fish zones restore populations, and forests lock carbon and support biodiversity. Shifting to plant-based diets and reducing farmland follow predator-prey logic, while innovations like Dutch high-yield sustainable farming show we can produce more with less. Reforestation efforts, as in Costa Rica, prove large-scale ecological recovery is possible. By halting deforestation, restoring native forests, protecting oceans, and adopting sustainable land and food practices, humans can stop the Sixth Mass Extinction, becoming true guardians of Earth and thriving alongside nature.

Creative Writing

Christopher Columbus High School

Quarter 1 Review

October 2025

Dream Link

By Francesco Armada

Walking to the bus stop, I see someone who catches my eye. He's a man in casual clothes with brown hair and standing at an average height, around five feet six (approximately). It isn't his comically large suitcase that seems too heavy for someone of his stature to carry, but his eyes that catch my attention. His right eye is a dim shade of blue, almost as if worn from the elements of life and its complexity. His left eye is a bright white that shimmers in the light of the brightly shining summer sun. Just as quickly as he grabbed my attention away from whatever I was looking at before, he got in a car and drove off.

"Could you help out your fellow man?" I hear behind me a man who can't be described as old just yet, but the man has definitely experienced the longer side of life. His clothes indicated the same, too. It's the type of clothes that the average person would look at and involuntarily make a "grossed out" type of face. I do feel bad for him and give him a ten-dollar bill. As I walk towards my bus, I hear the same voice from behind me, "God bless you, woman, you don't know how much even a little bit can go." From the bright blue seat on the bus, I wave from the window to the now much happier, not old man.

I don't like to think that I am someone who stands out very much. I live a humble life being a landscape artist and sell my paintings on social media. With that experience, I know what it's like to be your own boss, which is something a lot of people don't experience. The typical person will work a job where they work under a "boss" figure and do every little thing they say. If they say, "Go fetch me a cup of coffee!" Your reply should be "Yes, Sir!" If you want to keep that paycheck coming in, then it's necessary to be that person. That person may excel at a certain job and eventually get a promotion. There is no actual percentage, but only 7.63% of people don't get promoted after working

at the same job for five consecutive years. Thankfully, my daily schedule does not include being a lapdog for a man (or woman) in a big chair. My entire "job", if you could call it that, is to take the bus to a secluded area and hike into the mountains and paint a wonderful sunset. The only difficulty of my job is being able to paint the sunset while it's still paintable. Every sunset is different in its own way. The trees could have grown a little bit, or the sun is at a different angle. The smallest technical difference can make the biggest impact on the sunset. The same can go for people as well. The smallest change over even just a day can drastically change how others perceive them.

I keep seeing the man with the different colored eyes. He shows up in my dreams and wherever I go. Although seeing the man everywhere for the past few years isn't the strangest part, the strangest part is that I feel a sense of comfort that I feel exclusively with my family and good friends. I always struggled with the idea of love as a kid. The idea of cherishing just one specific person over everyone else is something that I never understood. I was always told things along the lines of "You just haven't found anyone worth loving yet", or "You'll find the one someday." Even now, the only people that I can say I truly "love" are my family. Not even my friends can come close to what the feeling of love is supposed to be like. I don't think I would even know if I felt the emotion called love. Tragic, I know, maybe a little bit corny, but that's how my thought process goes.

Being an entrepreneur is something I have wanted to do my whole life. I can't think of a time when being my own boss wasn't enticing. Of course, some things are worse about being your own boss. You have to limit yourself and assign yourself all the things that a traditional boss would tell you to do. Long story short, you have to think a lot more and have the

motivation to do the things that need to be done. That happens, though, when you reach adulthood. Things that weren't an issue when you were a kid become your biggest obstacles. I think the desire to be my own boss stems from my childhood. I didn't have some kind of traumatic childhood or anything.

I was raised by a single mother who always tried her best in the hardest of times. I never did have the newest thing. I was always using things that were old or discontinued. I remember in my high school years, I used a phone from about 10 years back. It wasn't the best phone, and it couldn't handle the things I wanted it to back then, but it got the job done.

Going to school was never really a hassle for me. I didn't like school, don't get me wrong, but I knew it was necessary in order to succeed in life. I don't have any memory of elementary school because that happens as you get older. I went to a small middle school that was better known for being an elementary school. If I told you the name, you would have never heard of it. It was the type of school that everyone had been there since birth. I'll leave it to you to figure out how kids who had known each other their entire lives treated someone much, much smaller than them. High school was a blur since I didn't do much but trudge through every day. Now that leads me to my life in the present.

Today I'm going to a nearby bus stop because I see people who look profitable and can be of service to my "business". Fun fact about the word "business": the word, if pronounced as spelled, is very similar to a word that doesn't actually exist: busyness. If it were a word, it might mean the act of being busy. That word accurately describes my job.

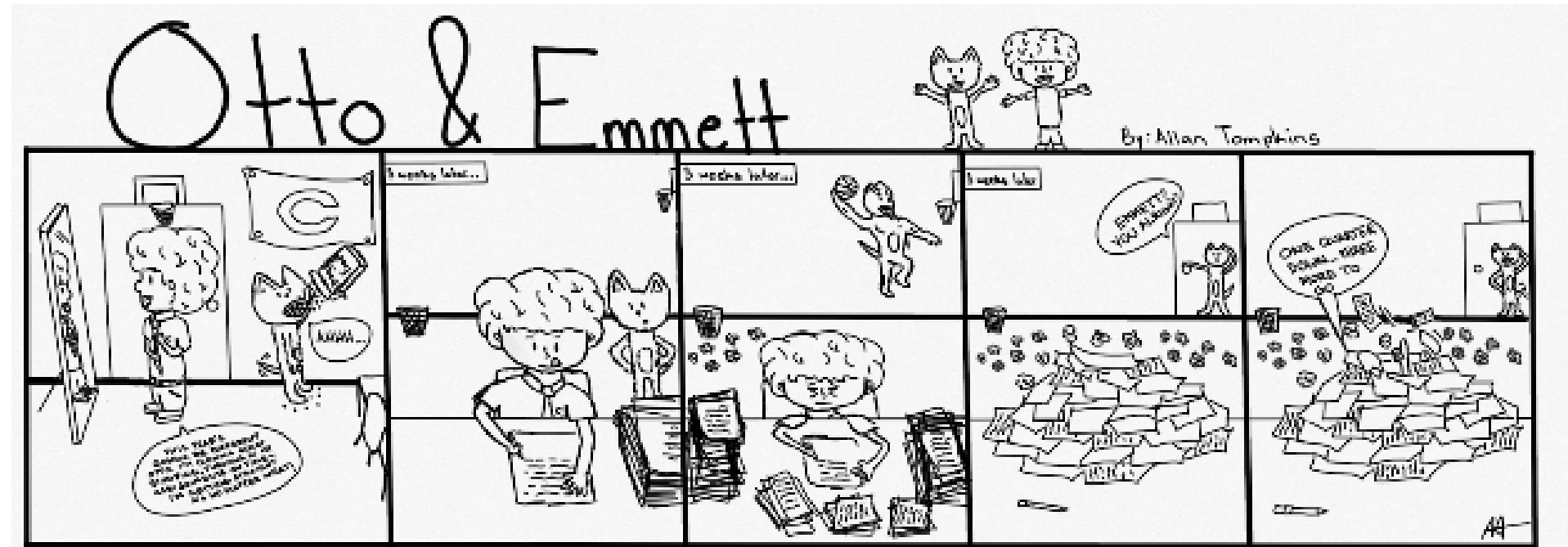
I'm carrying a suitcase that I'm sure looks as if it's too proportionally big compared to my body. Walking around, I see a motley of people who



don't seem as profitable as expected. I see multiple homeless people wearing raggedy clothes and shaking metal cans with little to no money inside. I see a rounded man with a sort of lumberjack kind of fashion with a button-down checkered shirt, and leather brown pants. One person catches my attention.

She is, at first glance, very beautiful and at second glance, still very beautiful. She has a sort of dirty blonde hair that has faint paint stains. A blue blouse that looks to be pretty worn, but also somehow elegant in its own sense. It's not her deep brown eyes or her somewhat tanned complexion that grabs my attention. It's something more uncanny, like a string that connects me to her. She seems so far from my view, and yet she is only about 30 feet away from me. I force my view away and get into a nearby taxi and drive back home to work more online. I seem to have better luck in sales when I advertise online.

The image of that woman lingers in my mind. Not wanting to go into more inappropriate thoughts. I attempt to think of something else. I drift off as I so often do into thought. Now and then, I try to remember my life up to now. It's a habit I picked up in childhood. Something inside me wanted to remember something. A faint memory that seems to be mine, but also so far away. I look back on my life and try to recall my memories. Every year that passes, I lose more and more. Memories, I am told, make up a person more than anatomical structure. If that's the case, then it feels as though my head is falling from my body.



The Log Philosophy

Christopher Columbus High School

Quarter 1 Review

October 2025

The Real Problem of Free Will in Classical Theism

By David De Paz

Many people have heard the argument that God's omniscience is incompatible with free will. However, this argument is low-level and has been refuted countless times in many ways. This essay is not meant to discuss those, but one should not simply take my word for it either, so if they are interested in that issue they should read into Luis de Molina, Boethius, and Thomas Aquinas's respective responses to said problem. Nevertheless, there is a higher level objection to free will in the classical theist framework, namely modal collapse.

Modal collapse is a collapse of all contingent truths, or those that could've been otherwise, into necessary truths, or those that could not. This would eliminate the possibility of free will, as the truth that you choose a particular option becomes metaphysically necessary. There are two reasons modal collapse might occur in classical theism.

Firstly, the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR) states that for every true proposition there must be sufficient reason for why it is true. This is relevant because the proposition "God created this world" must have sufficient reason. But there can be no external reason to God's essence, and God's essence is necessary. Therefore, it seems, the reason God chose to create this world is necessary, and thus the creation of this world necessarily flows from God's essence.

Secondly, classical theism, or more particularly thomism, holds to divine simplicity. This includes the doctrine of *actus purus*, which states that God's essence is the pure act of being itself. But classical theism also holds to divine simplicity, where God has no distinct parts and is fully simple. Therefore, God's essence is identical to the act of creation. If God's act of creation is his essence, and God is eternal and unchanging, then it follows that God's act of creation—which includes being the first cause of every occurrence in the universe—is eternally fixed. Thus, it seems that because God eternally wills this universe and cannot change his mind, this universe and all its events are the only metaphysical possibility.

Now, there are two distinct issues here. Firstly, there is the issue of divine freedom. The PSR seems to eliminate it, and without divine freedom, everything collapses into necessity. Secondly, there is the issue of the contingency of creation. If God's will is eternal and unchanging, then it seems to pass necessity onto creation, as there are no real alternatives.

Responses to this general problem of modal collapse seem to focus on one of these two problems. For ex-

ample, St. Thomas Aquinas responds to the second issue in arguing that creation is contingent in itself because the essences of created beings do not have existence in themselves, and depend on God for existence. In other words, they are contingent *per se*. However, this fails to address the second issue properly, because even if creatures are contingent *per se*, they become necessary *per aliud* (through another) given God's eternal and necessary will. And therefore, they all become necessary *de re* (in reality), even if they are conceptually contingent, because God's will cannot be otherwise or change *de re*. So the *per se* contingency of creatures can be preserved, but the real problem lies in the first issue: that of divine freedom.

Divine freedom is a very debated topic even within the camp of classical theism. Some responses include the thomists—who say that God's act of will is necessary but the contents of the will are contingent—and the scotists, who argue that God's will is formally distinct from his intellect, allowing for the will to be radically free and not determined by the intellect.

Both of these responses differ in their problems. As for the thomists, the response seems to be very shallow and merely hand-waving the problem. Simply stating that God could have done otherwise does not have justification, especially considering the fact that God's will is eternal and unchanging. Because God does not deliberate and has no metaphysical room for choosing, it seems arbitrary to say God could have chosen otherwise. So the thomist response seems to collapse back into necessity.

The scotist response makes the will radically free, but encounters a new problem: If God's will is radically free, then nothing determines his choosing of one alternative over another. In other words, there is no sufficient reason for God's willing of this world over another, making it a brute fact. Of course, this is problematic as it clearly violates the PSR.

There is another response which seeks to mend the scotist problem, being from Leibniz. Leibniz avoids the violation of the PSR by saying that the sufficient reason for God's choosing of this world lies in the fact that this is the "best possible world"; Because God is good and omniscient, he chooses the best world of all possible worlds. However, this just collapses into necessity again: If there is only one "best possible world," then no other possible world has any metaphysical meaning as they are impossible for God to select. So this world becomes the only truly possible

world.

One response I believe to be better than others is from contemporary philosopher and theologian Alexander Pruss. Pruss acknowledges the problems with these responses, but is sympathetic to the ideas of St. Thomas Aquinas. He improves the thomist response by agreeing that the act of God's creation is necessary and that the contents of the act are contingent, but gives a more robust framework as an explanation.

To Pruss, the reason we can call God's act free is because there is no "best possible world." Instead, there can be an infinite hierarchy of worlds that are better and better, e.g. there can always be a world with $n+1$ angels. This avoids God being locked into one necessary choice. However, Pruss also avoids violation of the PSR because he does not say that God's will is radically free or random. God has reasons to create a world which are determined by his nature; the choice of a particular world flows from God's wisdom and goodness. So there is a sufficient reason for God's choice, it just doesn't determine what choice that is, because there is no singular best possible world.

However, two issues still seem to persist. Firstly, if God's will is eternal and timeless, then it seems problematic to call his choice free if he never has a "moment" to choose between alternatives. But to Pruss, possibility is modal, not temporal. In other words, the fact that God's choice is free comes from the fact that he logically could have willed another world with sufficient reason, not from a temporal choice between alternatives. This preserves freedom and real contingency of the world as well as logical possibility of others.

Secondly, even if God's will is free, if this is the only world that will ever be actualized *de re*, then it seems arbitrary to call other worlds possible. However, this is just a tautological statement. Let world *w* be the actual world and world *z* be some other world God could have willed with sufficient reason. World *w* is defined by the set of propositions that are true for world *w*, and that makes it different from world *z*. To say that in world *w* that only the propositions from world *w* will be true and complain that the ones from world *z* will not be true is circular. The fact that this reality is world *w* and not world *z* does not change the fact that world *z* is a real possibility. Some might ask what grounds the possibility of world *z* given that God is eternally and changelessly willing world *w*, but this lies in the divine freedom: the fact that God could have willed world

with sufficient reason.

For now I believe Pruss's response suffices, but I have one worry: we become agnostic to what is possible or not. Pruss grounds possibility in the worlds that God could have willed with sufficient reason, but that seems to eliminate the possibility of any world that God would not have sufficient reason to create. We do not have access to the divine mind, so we cannot know which worlds these are. However, this worry could simply be meaningless. Let world *x* be a world that is logically coherent, but does not have sufficient reason for God to create it as world *w* and *z* do. This does not mean anything for us, because logical possibility is distinct from metaphysical possibility, and we live in a reality where only world *w* is actual anyways.

One might ask: if only world *w* is real then doesn't that mean our choices are restricted to world *w*, eliminating free will? But to Pruss, freedom is rooted in the causal powers of agents, not in the branching of possible worlds. In other words, if in world *w* I freely choose option A instead of option B, it is true that God's willing of world *w* includes the truth of me choosing option A, but this willing does not cause me to choose A instead of B. The freedom of my choice is grounded in my power to choose B, not in a possible world where I choose B. But this does in fact eliminate libertarian free will, because God is the ultimate ground of the truth of choice A, whereas I would be the proximate ground.

However, this does not fully eliminate free will, as compatibilism would still be true. It is my will that grounds the proximate truth of choice A, and I choose choice A in accordance with my own reasons and desires, which is freedom. Therefore, the fact that I freely choose choice A is compatible with the fact that God wills the truth of choice A as part of world *w*.

In conclusion, modal collapse can be avoided by distinguishing between the necessity of God's act and the contingency of the contents of his will, insofar as real alternative contents and God's reason to choose them are justified. This does not allow for libertarian free will, but leads to a compatibilist free will grounded in the causal powers of free agents.

Halloween Horror Nights 34: Ranking the 10 Houses

By Allan Tompkins



The Five Nights at Freddy's house makes creepy animatronics come to life during Universal's Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios on Aug. 29, 2025. (Patrick Connolly/Orlando Sentinel/TNS)

Halloween Horror Nights (HHN) is one of the most anticipated events of the year for horror fans nationwide, especially Floridians who see it as a fun, excitement-filled vacation at Universal Orlando. Every year, Universal goes all out with haunted house themes and production, and this year was no different. With its vast array of movie licenses, HHN can recreate some of the scariest on-screen locations, making this year's event especially memorable. From Freddy Fazbear's Pizzeria in Five Nights at Freddy's to the cabins at Camp Crystal Lake in Jason Universe, each location felt like a portal into spine-chilling cult classics. While every house was scary, some stood out more than others, so here's my ranking of all 10 houses from worst to best.

#10: El Artista: A Spanish Haunting

El Artista was fun and adventurous but lacked effective jump scares, earning the #10 spot. The story of 19th-century artist Sergio Navarro, whose haunted art traps him in La Casa Creación, was interesting and well-produced, but the scares felt predictable, making the experience less thrilling than expected.

#9: Dolls: Let's Play Dead

This house shrinks guests to

doll-sized humans hunted by mutated toys. While the oversized sets and crayon-scented rooms were immersive, the story and scares fell short, making it a forgettable experience and placing it at #9.

#8: Gálkn: Monsters of the North

Based on Norse mythology, Gálkn featured a wicked being rising from the dead and a horde of monsters culminating in a giant beast's belly. While creative and exciting, the lack of clear story progression and unexpected scares left me unsatisfied, earning it #8.

#7: Fallout

I'm not a fan of the Fallout games or show, but the house's bunker-like set was impressive. Occasional jump scares occurred, though few were effective. Strong costume design, including T-60 power armor and The Ghoul, kept it above the previous houses, landing at #7.

#6: Grave of Flesh

A young cemetery groundskeeper discovers flesh-eating creatures, and guests must escape the under-

world. While the story wasn't the main draw, the seamless transition from cemetery to underworld and immersive production earned this house the #6 spot.

#5: Five Nights at Freddy's

This house was nostalgic and fun, though jump scares were limited. The glowing pizzeria sign and animatronics like Freddy, Bonnie, and Chica were engaging, but the actor portrayals were occasionally more funny than scary, placing it at #5.

#4: Hatchet & Chains: Demon Bounty Hunters

An old woman summons lava demons, hunted by bounty hunters Hatchet and Chains. The story was confusing, but unexpected jump scares and the superhero-vs.-villain vibe, along with strong production, made it the best original Universal house at #4.

#3: Terrifier

Rumors of a "wet route" didn't disappoint entirely, though the corridor waterfalls only gave the illusion of blood. The production and actors portraying Art the

Clown were memorable, blending humor with suspense and building anticipation rather than relying solely on jump scares, earning #3.

#2: WWE Presents: The Horrors of the Wyatt Sicks

Surprisingly excellent, this house featured relentless jump scares as guests moved through domains stalked by The Fiend. Though the story was confusing for non-WWE fans, it was a tribute to Bray Wyatt and the Wyatt Sicks, and the immersive, constantly changing locations made it unforgettable.

#1: Jason Universe

Celebrating the 45th anniversary of Friday the 13th, this house toured guests through Jason Voorhees' most iconic moments. The creepy Camp Crystal Lake and consistent production were thrilling, but the standout sequence was a narrow hallway where multiple styled Jasons popped out from doors, swinging axes in a relentless loop, fully earning its top spot. Halloween Horror Nights once again proved why it's the ultimate celebration of scares, creativity, and immersive storytelling.

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Quarter 1 Review

October 2025



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