

For family, friends, & alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School



CONTINUUM

Spring 2022



Why We Call It
“Commencement”

*Class of 2022 prepares
for what lies ahead with
humor and gratitude*

25 YEARS OF
Braveart

**Straight from
the heart**

Remembering Cistercian with a Planned Gift



Phyllis and Bruce Carr

Parents of Alexander '94 and Phillip '99

In Sync with Tennyson

Everyone reaches a point in life when they consider what legacy they want to leave behind. Perhaps it is their children and grandchildren? Maybe it is their life's work? Maybe it is also through financially supporting an institution that has proven important to them?

Becoming members of the Memorare Society was important to us and our legacy, because we so appreciate our sons' education, the strong core values instilled in them, and our lifelong friends. Further, we continue to admire the dedication of all the monks and lay teachers who model and inspire *Ardere et Lucere*. This motto is in perfect sync with Tennyson's poem "Ulysses" that we used to say with our boys from a very young age: "How dull it is to pause, to make an end, To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!"

MEMORARE
SOCIETY

To remember Cistercian with a planned gift, contact Erin Hart.
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CONTINUUM

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Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, nationality, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission and education policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other activities.

Letter from the Headmaster

Admiring God's Creative Artistry in our School Community

"(the Lord) has filled him with the Spirit of God... and with all kinds of skills—to make artistic designs... and to engage in all kinds of artistic crafts."

Exodus 35:31-33

In this issue, I am reminded of the wonderful creativity and artistry God imparts as gifts for us all. Our feature article highlights the unique persons and personalities that have characterized



Fr. Paul McCormick

Cistercian's 53rd graduating class as they employed a healthy dose of creative humor and gratitude to successfully navigate their studies during the pandemic.

We could not be more proud of their many accomplishments and the rich brotherhood they take with them.

They will be missed!

Then, in our second feature, we honor BraveArt's 25th year along with all those

who have so generously shared their artistic passion and skills to excite and inspire the creative energies of our students. I particularly appreciate the tribute to our beloved veteran teachers Dr. Pruitt and Mr. Munguia whose gift it was to inaugurate such an amazing tradition.

It is always great fun to enjoy the creative and homespun wit and wisdom of **Smokey Briggs '84** as he reflects back on the fruits of having chosen "the path less taken." And as only he can do, Fr. Roch challengingly explains that peace and joy for the saints can spring from such tragedies as the current war in Ukraine.

Finally, be sure to check out Class Notes, where God's ongoing creativity and artistry is always on display in the colorful and multifaceted mosaic of the many activities and milestones of our alumni and their families.

Fr. Paul

In this issue

Volume 49, Number 1



Why We Call It "Commencement"

Fr. Stephen Gregg '01

*Class of 2022
prepares for
what lies ahead
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and gratitude*

8



25 YEARS OF BRAVEART

Straight from
the heart

Bob Greenfield

*"The arts have
flourished here,
and BraveArt has
had much to do
with that."*

Fr. Paul McCormick

14



Cover photo by Jim Reisch

Departments

News & Notes	4
Alumni Gatherings	21
Class Notes	22
In Memoriam	27
Sports	29
Afterthoughts	31
Does Christ Rule History? by Fr. Roch Kereszty	32

News & Notes



Gabrielle Comeaux

Fusion Corps is World Champion!

“We are the champions of the WORLD!” What else can be said after a year like this one? Team 6672 has taken part in the FIRST World Competition for just the third time since the creation of the team in 2016. This season, their robot, Resilience, lived up to its name. But the real resilience was in the team members who worked countless hours and tackled and solved many setbacks experienced during their matches. Fr. Mark said, “I especially enjoyed watching as the team gathered around our driver laptop and took it apart to try to troubleshoot why it turned off during the last match of the Galileo Division competition.” This was the final year of participation for seniors **Blake Harris '22** and **Nathan Comeaux '22**, and their contributions to the team will be missed. The success of Fusion Corps would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of parent mentors who have helped for the last five years: **David Novinski '90**, Kristy Novinski, Jennifer Jackson, and Jim Dorn, as well as the countless other parents who have helped out at practices and competitions.

Form I Field Study



Jim Reisch

After a two-year hiatus, Form I ventured to the John Bunker Sands Wetland Center to explore and collect water samples to test water quality. Judging by the smiles and collection of leeches, crawfish, and other macro-invertebrates, all had a great day!

Upper School takes on Shakespeare

The Upper School drama returned indoors with this spring's modern production of William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* adapted and directed by Tasia Magill. **Alex Dabbous '23** made his theatrical debut as Petruchio, “a man of Nebraska” looking to “wive wealthily in NYC.” The majority of the show was set in Manhattan and centered around the Minola sisters. Hilarity ensued as multiple suitors in disguises and through mistaken identity tried to court the sisters. The audience was able to follow these relationships through the characters' projected phone screens on the wall. Standout senior performances by **Nicholas Frano '22** as Vincentio, **Noah Vetter '22** as Lucentio, and **Leo Ontiveros '22** as Grumio only added to the success of the production. “I was inspired to tackle this ‘problem play’ by telling the story through the lens of our supersaturated, social media-driven world—to examine what a real love relationship looks like, not just through disconnected, polished filters,” said Magill.



Jim Reisch

Taming of the Shrew cast, crew and director

A Surprise Donation

For weeks, the English department had searched for Warriner's English Lab textbooks for Forms I-III. Recently the books had been taken out of print, but the department wanted to continue to use the series for future classes. As a complete surprise, the Surapaneni family most thoughtfully and generously purchased and delivered enough of the textbooks for all three English Lab classes! “Thanks to the Surapanenis and all the other generous donors,” said Gary Nied, head of the English department, “we

have now amassed 53 (first course), 55 (second course), and 69 (third course) books! I could not be more thrilled, and our supply is complete!”



Lisa Richard

Junior wins Scholar Award

Luke Herda '23 was awarded **The Catholic Foundation Scholar Award** at **The Catholic Foundation 2022 Award Dinner** in February. The award recognizes an outstanding high school junior each year. Luke focused his remarks on the



Luke Herda '23

balance in his life between academics and spirituality: "The former enriches the mind of a child, allowing them to make a difference utilizing intelligence. The latter enriches the child's soul, allowing them to grow in faith in God and therefore use this connection with Him to inform their decisions and life... A Catholic education provides both valuable facets to prepare each student

more than adequately to change the world in the future." Form Master **Tim Parker '90** said, "Luke genuinely sees beauty in what he is taught in the classroom, in what he is asked to read and write for homework. He is the rare student that is motivated solely by the desire to grow in knowledge and skill, not at all by the grade. And genuinely giving his all to all he does is not merely to make himself or his parents happy, but a way of bringing honor to God by taking full advantage of his talents. He is deeply aware of how blessed he is, recognizes more fully than most the power of God's grace working in his life, and shows his gratitude each day by living the Gospel with authenticity, humility and courage." Past winners of the award include **Michael Greenfield '99**, **Juan Muldoon '05**, **Vincent Zimmern '06**, **Paul Kim '13**, **Phong Nguyen '15**, **Patrick Andrews '17**, and **Jonathan De La Cruz '19**.

Cistercian hosts 2022 Diocesan Spelling Bee

In January, Cistercian hosted 25 schools for the 2022 Diocesan Spelling Bee. The competition went 15 rounds with Pratosh Raman, an eighth grader from St. Mark Catholic School, prevailing. His winning word was "haplography," a word which means "an error where a letter or group of letters that should be written twice is written once"—a spelling stumble of which Mr. Raman was never guilty. The top six spellers from the bee went on to compete in the Private Schools Bee in February.



Jim Reisch

Exodus 2021 Gold Medal Winner

Despite the challenges and limitations of the 2020-2021 academic year, the 2021 yearbook, "On Our Way," received recognition as a Gold Medalist by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association. The *Exodus* staff, under the leadership of editor-in-chief **Beto De Los Santos '21**, earned a total 916 out of 1000 points with All-Columbian Honors awarded for the book's visuals. Both **Sam Laber '21** and **Tri Ha '21** received 2022 Columbia Gold Circle Awards for their photography. "None of this could have been accomplished without the wonderful staff, especially Fr. Raphael. Each and every one provided us with the skill set to accomplish our vision," said De Los Santos.



Sam Laber '21: honorable mention, feature photo, "Makin it Crane" (upper left), 2nd place, sports feature photo, "Spring Division" (left) and honorable mention, yearbook portfolio of photos; **Tri Ha '21**: 3rd place, academic photo, "Rocketman" (above)

A beautiful gift—Word on Fire Bibles

Thanks to the generosity of Sandy and Bill Drexel, each student and faculty member received a beautiful leather copy of Bishop Barron's *Word on Fire Bible—The Gospels* before Christmas break. To make sure this gift was delivered in a meaningful way, Jared Zimmerer and Jackie Angel from Word on Fire delivered a presentation to encourage students to live out the truth of the gospels. "We are convinced God's work is being done at Cistercian," said Mr. Drexel. The Drexels then donated *Volume 2—Acts, Letters and Revelation* to all faculty and staff at the beginning of Lent.



News & Notes

Alumni College Panel

Five alums returned to campus after Christmas break to participate in the annual Alumni College Panel for Forms VII and VIII. **James Toliver '19** (Harvard), **Nate Sanchez '19** (University of Missouri), **Damien Walz '18** (University of Dallas), **Frank Saldaña '18** (Tulane), and **Caleb Treadway '18** (Texas A&M) discussed their college search and application process, the challenges they encountered, and offered advice on how to replicate their success. Each agreed that the



experience of attending Cistercian, while certainly unique among their peers, prepared them academically, socially, morally, and spiritually for their college careers.

Finance Club wins The Stock Market Game

Led by seniors **Ethan Christopher '22**, **Amar Vajja '22**, and **Stefan de la Peña '22**, the Finance Club competed this spring in The Stock Market Game. Members of the club studied last fall through a student-led education program with the help of alum sponsor **Jack Bitterman '14** and other guest speakers. Club members divided into teams to compete in the state-wide competition, and a team led by Vajja and sophomores **Rithvik Gabri '24**, **Sam Rogers '24**, **Tom Gambow '24**, and **Ben Refakis '24** placed first out of 759 teams in the DFW area and third out of 3,645 teams in Texas. Each team is given 100,000 dollars on paper to invest in real stocks with the goal of making more money than their opponents. Cistercian's team was forced to get creative this year with the stock market in sharp decline. Gabri devised a plan to take advantage of the market situation and frequently cited Sir Isaac Newton: "What goes up must go down."



Hillary Award

The 2022 Tom Hillary Award was presented to **Eli Sanford '22** at the Athletic Awards Presentation on May 5. Voted on by the coaching staff, this honor is given to a senior who plays multiple sports at a high level with "sportsmanship, leadership, and character" while maintaining "a high level of achievement." In this year's winner, those traits and characteristics are easily identifiable. "He is a remarkable young man. He is confident yet displays humility. His infectious personality makes him a joy to be around," said André Bruce, athletic director. "His coaches describe him as a tenacious player with tremendous heart, grit, and determination. He wholly embodies the mission of our great school."



Hungarian Order of Merit

The Hungarian Order of Merit is the fourth highest honor one can receive from the president of Hungary, and four priests from Our Lady of Dallas Cistercian Abbey have received this award. Consisting of six classes of merit, the Knight's Cross of the Hungarian Order of Merit is the first level of this honor. Abbot Peter (August 2021), Fr. Julius (May 2021), Fr. Roch (August 2021) and Fr. Bernard (August 2021) have all been recipients of the Knight's Cross medal. The connections between the Cistercian order in Irving and Hungary remain strong.



Academic WorldQuest competition

Cistercian's Junior World Affairs Council (JWAC) chapter gathered in February to flex their mental muscle in the Dallas World Affairs Council's Academic WorldQuest competition. The AWQ tests knowledge over 10 subject areas that change each year to reflect current events. Seventy-four teams of four from all over the Metroplex participated, with Cistercian Team 2 placing fifth and Cistercian Team 1 placing seventeenth. Cistercian's JWAC chapter began this past fall, with founding members from Forms VI and VII. "I am very proud of how well our boys did, and we look forward to next year's AWQ competition," said sponsor Lisa Hernandez.



Three named to honors orchestras

Three young men of Cistercian were recently named to TPSMEA honors orchestras: **Cayden Chen '28** (cello) for the middle school regional ensemble, **Ewan Randles '25** (viola)



for the high school regional orchestra, and **Silas Choi '25** (cello) for the high school all-state ensemble. Additionally, Choi was the second place winner for the junior category of the 2022 American Protégé International Piano & Strings Competition. Through this high accolade, he will have an

opportunity to play at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in 2023. "I am edified time and again by the immense musical talent held by the student body here at Cistercian," said music teacher Eric Lewis. "With a schola, a piano ensemble, and a string ensemble now in place, we hope to continue to help encourage, foster, and shape their gifts in every way possible."

Mock trial team continues to improve

The Mock Hawks' performance at the state competition proved that they did indeed find the formula for success last year when they repeated their fifth-place finish. With a slimmer margin for loss than last season, a single point out of 1300 kept them from advancing to the semifinals and earning a trip to nationals. The team featured several talented seniors whose hard work culminated in Cistercian's best finish to date, while igniting a young core team who will look to improve on the Mock Hawks' success next season.



Mock Trial team

BraveArt/EX 2022

BraveArt/EX, the upper school art exhibition, opened with a reception on May 1 in conjunction with Cistercian's Spring Recital. Art awards were announced before the recital intermission. First place went to **William**



Solace

Coulter '23 for *Solace*, second to **John Paul Hays '23** for *Lake*, and third place to **Ariel Santiago '25** for *Magma*. Alumnus **Will Murchison '06**, a practicing artist who shows with the Erin Cluley Gallery in Dallas, was the juror for BraveArt/EX. Honorable mentions were awarded to **Stephen Dorn '23** for *Pond* and **Brock Harrod '25** for *Life (Death)*.

Quiz Bowl advances

This has been an exciting year for Cistercian's middle and upper school Quiz Bowl teams. Middle school fared well in four competitions, qualifying for the National Middle School Championship. Although they only began competing this year, the middle school team is currently ranked 23rd in the nation. The upper school team finished second and fourth in the first tournament of the year, third in another tournament, and took



first, third and fourth place at their first in-person tournament. Twelve Cistercian students, four middle school and eight upper school players, traveled to Atlanta

over Memorial Day weekend to compete in the National High School Championship: **George Birdsong '26**, **Ben Brittian '26**, **Nathan Comeaux '22**, **Nico Chio '23**, **Ryan Fang '24**, **Christian Oh '26**, **Andrew Oliver '23**, **Neel Perumandla '24**, **Rafael Ramirez '24**, **Rishabh Rengarajan '25**, **Bennett Tschoepe '26** and **John Weinberg '25**.

So many new faculty babies! Pictured (left to right): Michael Humphries with daughter Rosemary, Chris Blackwell with son Kolbe, Eric Lewis and daughter Cecilia, and Jack Dorn '05 with son Nolan. Jason Joseph and his family welcomed Ethan James on May 27.





Why We Call It “Commencement”

*Class of 2022 prepares
for what lies ahead with
humor and gratitude*

Fr. Stephen Gregg '01

One afternoon as I arrived into a senior classroom to teach English, I saw hanging from atop the whiteboard behind the podium a nearly life-size photographic banner of one of the students in his basketball uniform, with a ball under his arm and on his face that rather serious look an athlete has to maintain for sporting purposes, because the game is never *just* a game. This poster was the relic of a “spirit” display from the season that had just reached its last game the evening before, daring someone to be emotional about the end of the season because the rest were unwilling to be the first, though all could agree on the sentiment. The represented player came in, late to class, and with total *sprezzatura* gave no reaction to the image; he just plucked it down from the board as all watched and folded it up to put in his bag. “It’s weird seeing it now that basketball is over... but I am sure my mom will want it.” A clever response and true, both deferring the emotion and accepting it.

Moments like the end of a sports season are stranger for seniors, because the moments of such finality keep coming without the year’s being totally over. Many such awkward shifts in spirit happen over the course of the year. The first guy gets into a college. The day comes when ultimately everyone knows where they are going the next year. Prom comes and goes. Seminar presentations are finished. The yearbook comes out. AP exams are over. The last final exams are taken. And there are many personal moments. Through all of them, while things seem to be ending, the students remain, as if given time to consider the nature of what it means to conclude and move on. In a paradoxical way it is a series of things the students must achieve but is also a set of experiences they are put through without being allowed out. It is active and passive, just like the verb “to graduate” has traditionally been used: we now say “he graduated,” but the more informed among us know it should be “he was graduated.” The faculty and the school, and his whole high school life, let him take the next *gradus*, the next step. He takes it himself, but it is also given to him—we build the stairs.



Of course, graduation is not an ending, which is why we call it “commencement.” It’s what *begins* with being graduated that matters, as most of us realize, since we hardly consider it a compliment to say someone “peaked in high school.” Sure, Cistercian is wonderful—trust me, I live here—but please... go do something else before you come back. The first thing that starts with commencement is a strange, new joy, when the year’s worth of last moments all come together and the sense of release is palpable. Even the most powerful ironic detachment can eventually be broken down by the night. One of the valedictorians spoke of this wisely, with the help of Dante. Many graduations feature Dante, because we have read his *Inferno* with seniors for quite a while, and the sentiment of “We just escaped hell!” finds too ready an echo in many hearts. But this year, because 2021 was the 700th anniversary of Dante’s death in exile in Ravenna, we studied not only *Inferno* but also *Purgatorio*—nothing against *Paradiso*, but the year is only so long. And so co-valedictorian Christopher Hardin ’22 could appeal to the glorious moment on the seven story mountain when the soul of the ancient poet Statius is ready to move on to heaven. The whole mountain shakes and all the souls cry out “Glory to God in the Highest,” and the soul of Statius explains that that is how they always react when a soul suddenly feels ready to move on, to be graduated into paradise. But how do you know when you are ready? Statius answers, “Our purging’s proof rests solely in the will, / which, free to change its place and company, / takes the soul by surprise, and brings delight / To will the change” (*Purg.* 21.61–64). The soul had been there five hundred years. It was always free to move, but it had a desire to remain, to make sure it was really ready, to detach itself from vice. But then, it is surprised by joy. Suddenly, the soul just feels that the will is totally ready to respond perfectly to the desire for happiness, and it’s time to walk up to heaven. The speaker

Enjoying their Texas History Trip in Form III: Devon Comstock ’22, Masaki Fraccaroli ’22, Santiago Ramirez ’22



Co-valedictorian Christopher Hardin ’22 speaking. Other co-valedictorians were Cole Boyd ’22 and Nathan Comeaux ’22.



Nathan Comeaux '22 Senior Seminar presentation

applied this to the Form's situation: suddenly, after all this long waiting and all the many trials, we are just free to go and no sense of unreadiness holds us back.

These seniors certainly realized how long a journey it is through our school to that moment of joy and the beginning of the next part of life. Of course there are always the usual academic hurdles: the vain attempts to learn the map of Earthsea for that Form IV English test, for example, or one student's efforts senior year to get credit for an answer by proving in painstaking detail on a note card how it is possible, in spite of the great difference between the two answers, to write what looks like "Charon" but actually intend "Church." (I did secretly like the idea that the dialogue of St. Thomas More's *Utopia* begins after the characters make a visit to *Charon*—I had wondered if maybe the student had discovered some hidden meaning in that text, but I still counted it wrong.) More than such trials, these recent graduates faced the painful process of COVID-ification of education for the middle part of their tenure in Upper School, with the sudden death of their sophomore year in spring of 2020 and the complexity of their junior year after that, when they, like all the Forms, operated in a distinct bubble without as much contact with other Forms, other teachers, other teams, and each other. This experience of transitioning back to a fairly normal school year should be what strikes us alumni as distinctive about these recent graduates: not the obstacles that we have all faced in one form or another through our time at Cistercian, but rather the unique opportunity that was afforded these young men to reinstate the fairly normal senior year. If the

Launching rockets in Form III: Santiago Ramirez '22, Landry Pingel '22, Colin Bildner '22, Luke Rain '22

Class of 2021 faced the challenge of preserving the spirit of things even when most of the outward forms of school were reduced, the Class of 2022 has had the opportunity to expand back into those external realities and revivify the place. Homecoming needed to be planned, pep needed to be rallied... it all had to restart. Whatever ghosts had snuck their way down into those remarkably cramped Form VIII classrooms had to be exorcised.

Although our school certainly has its sense of being old, even ancient, in its forms, every school constantly faces this surging sense of newness every day, because every school is full of kids. The seniors did not have to invent that, but perhaps the staleness of atmosphere enforced by COVID times of the recent past made this class's efforts more exciting and noticeable. That is probably why a fairly normal event could become so striking. For example, when *Reflections* runs a small competition for poems or stories or some such thing, they need to announce the winner. Sometimes that ends up only happening at the awards ceremony to end the semester, but this year the editors thought we should just throw our own little party outside and announce the winners during lunch. So cookies and drinks were set out on a table outside the library, and staff members gathered those Middle School students who had submitted writing and art. Editor Walker Homan '22 then stood upon the stone circle and read out the winners, along with detailed critiques of their pieces written by the magazine staff. The winning students were invited to read their pieces, and those who submitted to the competition were allowed to get cookies before everyone else—a privilege every student can appreciate. You would have thought Walker had invented the cookie, the children were so enthusiastic. What would normally have been a low-key event suddenly seemed important: we can actually gather different Forms together again, and see each other's faces and hear each other's voices. The image of Walker—a senior—elevated above a small sea of middle schoolers as he read out the winners was so striking that in a subsequent Upper School mass he





Senior one act play, *Wasted Labor*, directed by Nicholas Frano '22 and Leo Ontiveros '22

was compared by the preacher to none other than Jesus Christ himself, as if reading from the *Reflections* critique was like reading the names inscribed in the Book of Life. (NB: Walker found the canonization amusing but insisted he has a little more work to do when it comes to being Jesus—and his classmates agreed.) But there is something to be said for imagining God's presence among us in surprising ways. If we're not eager to call each other together for these little celebrations, how likely are we to be ready for God's call to heaven? Such meetings—and there were countless other examples this year both less and more formal—channeled the beauty of being together that the COVID-19 experience had diminished.

One major casualty in the war on viral infection was the spirit of comedy; survival mode tends to enforce lockdown on the broader forms of humor, and the medical mask and the comic mask are pretty different. It is not easy to revive the spirit of comedy in today's rather serious world. Indeed, in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which is missing most of the part about comedy, the philosopher whose works are by no means funny simply states, "We have no record of the origins and development of comedy since no one paid much attention to it." Comedy sort of comes from nowhere. That is why many were caught off guard by a huge comic play that two seniors put on as the fruit of their senior seminar in Theater. The other senior seminars were gathered back in the usual "Seminar Night," a vast set of simultaneous presentations throughout campus one evening, but the afternoon of the day before was dedicated to Nicholas Frano and Leo Ontiveros's production. On a Monday after school—not exactly peak entertainment hour—we suddenly found ourselves in a packed theater watching an uproarious 90-minute play written, directed, produced, advertised, and acted by our own students.

This was not the usual little senior one act, but a full-fledged comedy; it made me wonder if I had stepped into an alternate dimension. True to the spirit of comedy as Aristotle understood it, the play, entitled *Wasted Labor*, was certainly the "imitation of inferior people" and its characters were "not cruel or vicious, but laughable," a "shortcoming or disgrace that doesn't involve any serious pain or destruction," notwithstanding the occasional psychopathic stabbing and two characters' breaking legs. The play centered on a troupe of wannabe actors, each with their own oddities, gathered

to put on one Shakespearean play but then surprised to find out they are putting on a totally different one for which they are cast more or less randomly. The two famous directors working with them, played by the two seniors responsible for the play, were send-ups of the theater type, one drill-sergeant aggressive and the other on the rather more flamboyant side. These were certainly "inferior people," but the elemental inanity of the comedy cut to the quick of one aspect of the students' experience: I can imagine that on a bad day my harsh expectations as a teacher might combine with my own incompetence to look, to the poor students unwittingly gathered together into the cast, a little like these two insane directors. The satire was sharp and the humor was, as advertised on the poster, "for immature audiences"—but that too goes right back to Aristotle's account of comedy's origin. On the one hand, the play was simply insane, but on the other it was surprisingly acute in its caricatures, and, as with every joke of course, the proof was in the abundant laughter. Frano and Ontiveros had succeeded in inviting us into the minds of students with an almost uncomfortable openness. It felt like a privilege to be invited in that way: the satire was shared for all to see, and that is a sign of life. It was another instance like what Statius experienced, when freedom (or excess?) takes the soul by surprise.

Joy is always a surprise, so it is a hard thing to calculate, to provide, to prepare for, to schedule. Not even Aristotle knew where comedy came from; it just happens when a funny person stands up. In ways that are hard to explain, the recent graduates were ready not only to work, and pray, and organize, and apply, and do all the things that seniors have to do, but also to revive this hard-to-pin-down spirit of joy. Of course, their Form Master, Fr. Anthony, had done his job well and spent years preparing them for this role.

One attempt to prepare a little sentimental land mine to catch them at the end of senior year was to have them write letters to themselves in Form I, which Fr. Anthony then returned to them at the end of Form VIII. Of course, the students thought this was some kind of tradition, so they asked me what was in my Form I letter. I thought they meant some kind of letter of acceptance into the school, but once I figured out what they meant, I said, "Nothing. We didn't have that." At that moment one of the seniors said he also had gotten nothing. "But you have the letter right there!" "I left it blank."

Now this was a curious moment: one of the seniors had, when he was in Form I, simply folded the blank piece of paper into the envelope and addressed it to himself, and Fr. Anthony had then kept this blank page for seven years to give it back to him. Was this more

"wasted labor"? Of course, after a semester of interpreting strange modern stories in English class—read Murakami's "Dabchick"—we had ways of trying to come up with some meaning. The first, seemingly obvious interpretation was simply that the student had not cared at the time and was lazy, so he had just written

nothing and put his head down. Or could there be more? Some suggested it was a nihilistic statement, or a brilliant moment of First-Form existentialism: the blank page as an invitation to authenticity, to write your own future word on the page rather than be confined by past expectations. Or was it just stubborn refusal to accept any advice from anyone, even from oneself? The student said, "Probably I just realized I was a dumb First Former so what could I possibly say to my future self?" A curious interpretation: the blank page from Form I is a sign that one hoped, back then, to become someone who needed more than First Form-level advice. Some strange combination of resigned compliance, lazy negligence, and subtle hope... that's a bit much for a blank page.



The Class of 2022 has been officially graduated.



Fr. Anthony at Form I orientation

The students have had plenty of opportunity to receive sincere advice from points of view a little more enlightened and demanding than their own childhood selves. For one thing, their Form Master, Fr. Anthony, is also the Director of Admissions, so, every time they were summoned to his office or chose to seek him out on their own, they would have the subtle feeling that they were starting at Cistercian all over again. When they would hear him passing through the hallway by the senior classrooms, speaking the familiar tone of the tour guide for a prospective family, they would cringe in embarrassment, like when your mother makes you stand there while she tells a guest about all your awards or goes through your baby pictures with company. More than the average Form Master, a Director of Admissions has to think about the composition of a class in all the ways that go beyond a prospective student's GPA or ERA. It is not easy to foresee how one fourth grade boy will grow when put alongside other kids he has not yet met with very different talents and energies and personalities, to put them in a little room for a long time with a lot of pressure and hope something refining rather than explosive occurs. The students spoke of how much they appreciated the sincerity of Fr. Anthony's view of them, since he had both the clarity of objective data on his mind but also the sympathetic vision of someone putting together a dynamic group. Whenever they needed it, he could quickly run them back through the mental tour of the school to remind them why they were brought here in the first place.

Maybe that admissions mindset, being expert in hopes about what's new founded on a clear awareness of the place's goals, is what prepared these students to face the opportunity for renewing the normalcy of a senior year. The path through school is a year-by-year progression, but the human growth that can occur shoots off in many directions and relies on each moment being right. Fr. Anthony also volunteered himself as "chaplain" for the baseball team, and although I would hardly pin him as a *Deep Space Nine* fan, it's worthwhile returning to Capt. Sisko's early attempt to explain human life by means of baseball: "It's linear. Every time I throw this ball a hundred

different things can happen in a game. He might swing and miss, he might hit it; the point is you never know, you try to anticipate, set a strategy for all the possibilities the best you can, but in the end it comes down to throwing one pitch after another and seeing what happens. With each new consequence the game begins to take shape.” As Sisko insists, it is not quite knowing and being prepared for anything that makes the game exciting; “the game wouldn’t be worth playing if we knew what was going to happen.” The students knew they had someone in their dugout who was eager to see how the game would take shape. If commencement is when the pitched student comes into contact with the bat, Fr. Anthony can reasonably hope they all at least come within the foul lines.

Towards the end of the year, once the students had all made their decisions about college, a map went up in the hallway with tiny cut-out faces of each classmate posted where they plan to attend. It seemed strange to me that the seniors would flock around this board in such numbers, since they all already knew where everyone was going. It turns out what they were doing was trying to determine the distance between the various places, to see what it would take, for example, to go visit so-and-so in Chicago if I leave this or that other place on a Friday afternoon. (Answer: it depends what time you have class on Monday.) First of all, it was charming to see students attempting to reinvent the



Julius Andrews '22, Benjamin Limsenben '22, and Peter Ellis '22 testing cars for physics in Form IV

use of an analog map with a scale rather than simply searching on their phones: huddling up on top of each other at the map is more true to the experience than just finding the information. But even more interesting was the way that the desire for further connection entertained them—it is natural enough in students who have been around each other for so long that they can no longer imagine not knowing each other, but you can’t therefore take this noble aspiration for granted. Just one of those less tangible signs that the year, and the course of years, had gone well. •



Prom—another milestone for the senior class



25 YEARS OF

BRAVEART

Straight from
the heart

Bob Greenfield

It started 25 years ago in the gloaming behind drawn curtains in the old gym before there was a new gym. A bigger-than-expected crowd of curious students and faculty showed up for the first BraveArt Coffeehouse. At one point, a hulking tight end on the football team balanced a portable keyboard on his knees and banged out a honky-tonk tune until the keyboard came unplugged and everyone laughed and laughed, including the tight end. Such was the auspicious beginning of BraveArt, Cistercian's celebration of the arts. Since then, the curtain has gone up, revealing a vibrant, exciting, full-tilt festival of the arts that has woven its way into the very fabric of the School.

BraveArt has never been about simply teaching art, although much teaching has occurred. Teaching happens in classrooms or studios; BraveArt happens in the heart and the head, but most intimately, in the heart.

"It is more than knowledge of the arts," explained Fr. Paul McCormick, headmaster. "BraveArt, what it was and what it has become, is about sharing with the boys the creative experience of the arts. It is an essential part of what we're trying to do for the boys in terms of their formation."

In the beginning...

Longtime English faculty member Dr. Tom Pruitt remembers the beginning of BraveArt in 1996 as somewhat accidental. "We kind of stumbled into the rhythm of a festival," Pruitt said. "Fr. Peter, who was headmaster at the time, wanted to do more for the arts. We started with the first

Coffeehouse behind the curtains in the gym, because we wanted a very intimate space. From there it grew into a three-day festival which got the boys out of the routine patterns they followed every day and showed

them that art is worth it for its own sake, for the joy of it. My hope was—and still is—that it has awakened the boys to the possibilities of everyday life in a way that they might not have seen otherwise."

Awakened, indeed. Over the next few years, BraveArt the Coffeehouse became BraveArt the frenzied three-day arts festival with a student art competition and exhibit, hands-on workshops, presentations by professional artists, field trips to museums and theaters, and, as Pruitt recalled: "a fun,

exciting, joyous lifting of the students' spirits for a short time out of the rigors of their studies."

Early in the development of BraveArt, the art department got involved. "If Tom gave birth to BraveArt, I was something of a midwife, I suppose," said Roberto Munguia, head of Cistercian's fine arts department. "BraveArt is like a kaleidoscope, lots of brilliant and bright colors, and always changing from one moment to the next. It has been very satisfying to start a community dialogue on the arts as

something worthy to be set aside and to celebrate."

Munguia tapped into his long-standing position in the art community throughout Texas to attract professional artists to speak at the opening presentation and to lead hands-on workshops. "It was always so much fun to see the perplexed look on the students' faces when they discovered something in a workshop that they had absolutely no clue about but eventually incorporated into their practice. That's called mind expansion, I think, and it was the best part of the workshops for me," Munguia said. "For the students just to meet with artists from the community who are so passionate about what they're doing, that is really invaluable."

Of course, Munguia, Pruitt and the other BraveArt organizers, including many parent volunteers and donors, wanted the students to realize that art is everywhere in the community. Beginning in 1999, students and faculty found themselves wandering the halls of all the major art venues, theaters and performance halls in the Metroplex, including the Dallas Museum of Art, the Kimball and the Modern in Fort Worth, the Meadows on SMU's campus, the Crow Museum of Asian Art, and the Meyerson Symphony Center, among others.

Another art form that demanded attention was film. Jonathan Leach, a former member of the English department who coined the name BraveArt

in reference to the 1995 Mel Gibson film *Braveheart*, suggested a movie night. A night or an afternoon was set aside when Leach or



Dr. Newcomb and sons



1999 poster by Chris Babb '99



2016 guerrilla video workshop

another faculty member would share with the students a viewing of a movie and lead them in discussion. For several years, students could choose between one or two films, and in 2008, each Upper School Form had its own movie to view and discuss. Ultimately, and for one year only, BraveArt

featured an all-day film festival. Complementing the discussions of popular and classic films, Jim Reisch, Cistercian's resident guru of photography, led at least two workshops every year on the finer points of photography and filmmaking.

Changing with the times

Like art itself, BraveArt never remained the same from one year to the next. Changes in its format were inevitable. The sheer weight and intensity, to say nothing of the logistics, of a three-day festival was difficult to sustain. Beginning in 2010, BraveArt began to morph into a different version of itself.

"It got to be too much, too exhausting," said Greg Novinski '82, assistant headmaster and head of the upper school. "And the really bad part of it was the feeling at the end of three intense days of BraveArt that we were now exhausted because of art, feeling ready to be done with art for the year. That's a terrible thought. We decided that we had to split off facets of the festival into separate events but still with the BraveArt name. We wanted to have art around us all year long, not just for three days."



2012 collage workshop



2014 Indian dance workshop

Now, instead of one BraveArt Coffeehouse, there are two: one in the fall and another in the spring. A student art competition still happens every year, but the culminating exhibit is now held off campus in the Irving Arts Center. Instead of one day every school year devoted to field studies of the arts, history teacher Peter Saliga plans trips to museums and theaters throughout the year and in conjunction with the curriculum. An American History class might visit an exhibition of early American art, or

an English class might take in one of Shakespeare's plays.

Saliga has also continued and expanded upon the BraveArt tradition of a movie night. Now, several films are viewed by students, parents, and the community at large throughout the year. "We've taken the BraveArt idea of a movie night just for students and offered that experience to a



2009 Coffeehouse



Greek dance workshop

broader audience,” Saliga said. “And very much like Jonathan Leach used to do, when we view a movie, we try to go beyond the superficial level of movie-as-entertainment and look at its deeper meanings and its context. And then we talk about it. So, it’s about entertainment, education, and conversation.”

Remaining constant

Despite the changes in format, the most important aspects of BraveArt have remained constant.

Having two BraveArt Coffeehouses simply doubles the opportunity for students to share their talents, which many of their classmates may never have seen before.

Coffeehouse with Fr. Gregory

As Pruitt observed of the first few Coffeehouses: “The boys began to see each other in a different light. They developed a greater appreciation, a sense of gratitude for one another. A lot of them saw talents in their classmates that they didn’t know they had. It was like they would say to themselves ‘Wow! I didn’t know he could do

that!’ They had been practically living together at school for years, but they had never seen that side of their classmates.”

And for some students, BraveArt is their chance to shine and receive the recognition they might not have received otherwise. “It’s very human to want to be noticed,” said Novinski. “BraveArt gives all of us at the School a lens into seeing new facets of each other that we hadn’t seen before. There might be a student who’s not winning math contests, but we find out he’s writing a symphony. It’s that authentic, classmate-to-classmate recognition that really matters.”



2014 tie dye workshop

we create, we are touching on that part of God that He’s shared with us. We could be creative in math or science, or art. Whichever way we do it, we’re bringing life into the world and making this place more alive by doing so. BraveArt personifies that.”

Or, as Fr. Paul so aptly put it: “BraveArt is an institution that continues to grow. It’s about art, and art is what it means to be human. In terms of our faith, it is about pursuing God in the beauty of art. We discover Him there, and that is part of our mission at Cistercian, to help the boys discover Him. BraveArt has blossomed and bloomed into many wonderful things over the last 25 years.”

Rooted in the arts

The soil where it took root, sprouted and blossomed has as much to do with the blooming of BraveArt as anything else. The arts were there at the founding of the School in the person of Fr. Damian Szödeányi, Cistercian’s first headmaster from 1962–1969. To this day, his wood, stone and metal sculptures and his paintings grace the halls and public spaces of the School and, especially, the Abbey Church. Before escaping the Communist



Fr. Damian bronze

suppression in Hungary, Fr. Damian had earned degrees in literature, philology, and art history. An article from *D Magazine* dated April 1983 said of Fr. Damian’s art: “He looks for ‘something of God’s intention’ in a piece of stone or wood, then works to bring that divine purpose to the surface. ‘I’m not the kind of artist who is working for details,’ [Fr. Damian] said. ‘If I get the essence, which I am



inspired to do, I stop.”¹

“Art is in our heritage,” said Fr. Paul. “It’s in our DNA. It’s our culture. And several of the young monks are quite accomplished artists in their own rights.”

Seemingly, Fr. Ignatius has picked up where Fr. Damian left off. Paintings by Fr. Ignatius now adorn the School and Church, as well as homes and offices in the



Image from the first pinhole camera workshop

area. Fr. Augustine, who is no slouch of a musical artist, had this to say about Fr. Ignatius’s art in a *Dallas Morning News* article: “In the community of the monks, he reminds us of the value and importance of the artistic in life on a fairly regular basis.”²

Fr. Raphael’s talents in pottery, photography and printmaking have found expression in several workshops at BraveArt in recent years. Fr. Francis ’01, when he was still Brother Francis, has shared his gift for songwriting in workshops as well.

Practically every day, the musical art of Fr. Stephen ’01 and Fr. Augustine ’00 is impossible to miss at daily Mass in the Abbey Church and public events at the School. Fr. Stephen, who is the Monastery’s choirmaster, has offered BraveArt workshops like “Hearing the Music” and “Gregorian Chant.” Other faculty who have led workshops include Michael Humphries, Gary Nied, Fr. Philip



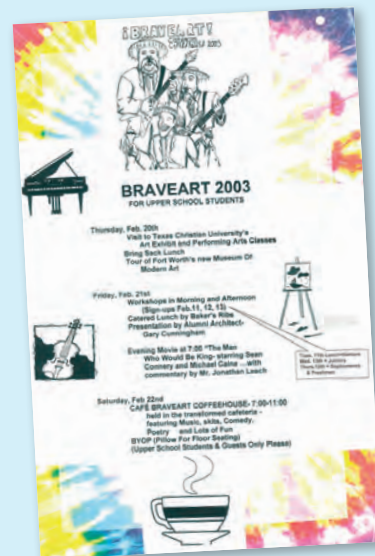
2010 Coffeehouse emcees



2010 light painting workshop

’00, Jim Reisch, Peter Saliga and Fr. Gregory.

Twenty-five years of BraveArt have played a huge role in the vibrant arts culture of today’s Cistercian Preparatory School. “Much of the art we see around us and we see expressed by the students is the fruit of BraveArt,” Fr. Paul said. “The arts have flourished here, and BraveArt has had much to do with that.” •



BraveArt T-shirts

¹ <https://www.dmagazine.com/publications/d-magazine/1983/april/the-abbey-on-highway-114/>

² <https://www.dallasnews.com/news/2014/01/17/irving-monk-uses-art-to-spread-god-s-message/>

Volunteers

The heartbeat of BraveArt

Months before every BraveArt, volunteers begin to gather. The planning and plotting commence, and over the course of many meetings and phone calls, detailed plans begin to emerge. Then, the real work begins: the staging of each event, acquiring the materials needed to make art, preparing the artists' workspaces, decorating the surroundings, and—just as important—arranging for that highly anticipated catered lunch when the students, artists, teachers and volunteers enjoy a meal together and celebrate art.



BraveArt has created some very special memories over the years among the many volunteers.

Tatiana Ramirez (Santiago '22 and Mateo '21)

"In 2019, our theme was 'What Moves You?' How ironic that turned out to be, because right afterwards, we were sheltering in place and not moving at all due to the pandemic. My boys weren't inclined to the fine arts, but I think we have to explore our artistic side as human beings. I was amazed when one of my sons got up and did improv in front of the whole school. I thought that was a brave thing for him to do. Self-expression, however we do it, is really important. I was so inspired by the hard work the teachers and volunteers put into BraveArt every year. And they did it without hesitation. The volunteers would ask for something, and the faculty sponsors would say 'let's do it!' That just amazed me."

Patty Tomaso (Mike '06, Luke '12 and Sam '14)

"Yes, we were 'Family BraveArt' for a while there with our three boys. They clearly enjoyed it and would always prepare to perform their music at Coffeehouse. It was a privilege for me to be present and see how proud the boys were when Dr. Pruitt would recite poetry. There were many small moments like that... The event itself was always so much fun. It let the

boys feel free and young and carefree again for a while. And even if they couldn't get into the workshop of their first choice, everyone would just embrace the opportunity to be creative and laugh and enjoy it. And then seeing the artistic talent of the boys, that was really remarkable."

Ellen Dorn (Peter '16, Matthew '18, Stephen '23)

"I always loved BraveArt. I thought it was great that these guys, who are so focused on hard core academics, at least for a day or two were able to work the other side of their brains in a fun, relaxed setting. To see real artists and realize there's another world out there, that's just a great way to spend a pretty spring day... One of the workshops my guys got a kick out of was the Guerrilla Video Workshop. There were two of them, one in the morning when the students would run around all over BraveArt filming what was going on. The second workshop would be in the afternoon, and the boys would splice together their video and make a wrap up of the event to show at the end of the day. It was a lot of fun... Mr. Munguia, because of his connection to the arts community, really made BraveArt what it is today."

Nancy Klink (Kurt '06)

"BraveArt was such a highlight of the year for the boys: the way they would plan and get ready for it and the joy they had trying to figure out which artistic workshop they were going to attend. One of the years I was involved, Mr. Munguia said something about how great it would be if we had a parachute as a backdrop for the Coffeehouse stage in the lunchroom. I went to Addison Airport and asked around, and I found an old parachute which they gave to me. It worked great. And then I got six or seven of those big spools for electrical cables from an electrical contractor, and we used them for tables in the lunchroom. It was so much fun working with the teachers and relating to them in a different way than we normally did as parents."

Benefactors

Sustaining BraveArt

Sustaining BraveArt year after year for the last two-and-a-half decades has been a communal effort. Volunteers have devoted their time. Artists have shared their passion. And donors have given of their treasure so that BraveArt could be what it set out to be: a pure celebration of the arts removed for however short a period of time from the rigors and demands of the real world.

Carol Campbell, former docent, Dallas Museum of Art (Tom '00)

"My volunteer work in art may have drawn me to BraveArt, but what attracted me most was the influence I saw that it had on our son. He was very interested in video and filmmaking. BraveArt, as well as Cistercian's regular course offerings in art, photography, videography and computer work, were fantastic.

BraveArt and these classes encouraged him to go on to a very productive career in cinematography, videography and editing. Now, he's a member of the Directors Guild of America. I think the fine art exhibit and competition that are a part of BraveArt are great for young students. The competition spurs their interest in the arts, and that's wonderful."

Maia Jourde, professional harpist (Devin '07 and Dillon '10)

"The arts are very near and dear to our hearts as a family. I am a musician, and both our boys are musically inclined. The variety of workshops and the various ways that the boys could experience art at BraveArt was amazing. Our boys still have their didgeridoos, and when they come home, they always play them—sometimes at 2 a.m., which is not good. This just shows the impression BraveArt has had on them. They loved it. I hope BraveArt continues for a long time to come. We appreciate very much that Cistercian has made our boys very well rounded."

Artist Workshops

The heart and soul of BraveArt

Artists from the far corners of Texas and from as close to home as the Cistercian faculty have come to BraveArt to share



their love and passion for the arts with students. The workshops over the last 25 years have touched on practically every conceivable art form. Workshops like painting, sculpture, silversmithing, creative writing, film, photography, and dance are always well represented; students with not-so-traditional interests have had much to choose from as well, such as stand-up comedy and

improv, video games, digital DJ skills, mime, sandcastle art, hip-hop, tie-dye and many more. By and large, the artists have gotten as much out of BraveArt as the students.

Mike Uhrick, metalworking and scrap art (Michael '14 and George '15)

"When it started out, the metalworking workshop was open to any upper school student, but now it's evolved into a senior class project. We (Form Master, seniors and I) come up with a design ahead of time so that on the day of BraveArt, I spend the first hour teaching how to use the equipment before the boys get after it. By the end of the day, we unveil that year's installation. It's a lot of work but so gratifying for me. It's special. In fact, I've heard from some of the guys years later, and they say they took art classes in college or they've taken up welding as a hobby because of my workshop. That's really satisfying." The art created in Uhrick's workshop each year can be seen all over the Cistercian campus.

Fred Villanueva, painting and conceptual art, former Cistercian student and graduate of the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts

"I've done five or six BraveArts now, and the challenge is always to come up with a project for a workshop that will change the way the boys perceive what art is and where it comes from... to show them that art isn't just an 'object.' At least today, it goes beyond that. A couple of BraveArts ago, we did a land art project where we did a giant drawing on the back soccer field. I remember how everyone on the team looked at it when we were done, and we were all just in awe. It was something of a eureka moment for the boys, because they realized that 20 people could do art together, and it doesn't have to exist on paper. It can exist as earth... Over the years, it's been so wonderful to see CPS alums collaborating as a community of artists. It's inspiring for me to realize how many lives have been affected in a positive way by Roberto Munguia. It was Roberto and Cistercian that inspired me to believe in myself and become an artist. Art really is something special at Cistercian."

Rob Greenfield '92, pianist

"During my workshop when I talked about making a living as a musical artist, I remember several of the students played for me. There was one who was nervous and shy, and I assured him that he should just enjoy the playing of the piece. He played a certain part of the piece, and I suggested he give it an artistic flourish. I said, 'You should really milk that part for all it's worth.' He smiled and loosened up, and his whole vibe changed. Then all of us had a real good conversation about music... I graduated before BraveArt started, and Dr. Pruitt called and asked me to come back to be the presenter in 1999. I was so excited because I had a great connection with Dr. Pruitt. I would have done anything for him. That presentation was about the history of jazz, and I quoted Paul Whiteman who said jazz came to America 300 years ago. I'm really happy that Cistercian has kept BraveArt going all these years."

Cambria Reinsborough, former Cistercian chemistry teacher (Calder '08)

"Oh, BraveArt! It was my favorite day! Cistercian is such a rigorous place, so to see the boys and interact with them on a completely different level was so much fun. To see them combine their critical thinking skills and their creative thinking in a different way outside of the classroom, they just loved it, and I did too... With tie-dyeing, the boys had to give up control. They had to realize that no matter how careful they were, they had no idea how it was going to turn out. That's part of the fun. And they had to be patient. They had to rinse and squeeze out the dye, and rinse and squeeze again. They'd say, 'I want to be done.' And I'd tell them to rinse and squeeze some more. They learned valuable lessons about art and life."

Deborah Alcalá, silversmithing (T.J. '09)

"It would always amaze me that these boys are not afraid to try anything and do it really well! They would take to silversmithing immediately. These boys are at the top of the range intellectually and academically, but they're also at the top of their game when they start to work with their hands with art. I remember one year a boy cut out a crown of thorns—cut it out!—and then we soldered it around a crucifix. It was an amazing piece. Many of them made pieces for their mothers, and that was really touching. BraveArt is just a wonderful experience for the boys outside of their everyday academic world. It opens up so many of them to the possibilities that are available to them. 'Am I an artist?' they ask themselves. Or, 'How can I use art in the profession I'm going to pursue?' BraveArt opens those kinds of doors to them."



Alumni Gatherings



Phoenix dinner



Ft. Worth dinner



Denver happy hour

In Memoriam

Brent Bulger '83

William Brent Bulger was born on August 23, 1965, and passed away on December 18, 2021. Born to Jacqueline Stanford and Gordon Michael Bulger, Brent was preceded in death by his mother. He is survived by his son, Kyle Bulger;



Brent Bulger '83

father, Mike Bulger; siblings Michelle Kossler and Scott (Li) Bulger; nieces Katy Kossler, Sara Kossler, Lauren Kossler and Meileen Bulger; nephew, Zachary Bulger; and many devoted and lifelong friends, aunts and uncles.

Brent was a one of a kind who exuded quiet confidence with his wicked grin. He was steady. Brent never wanted any accolades, never wanted to be the center of attention. He didn't want anyone to know that he was sick and tried as long as he could to keep it quiet.

Cistercian was a special place for Brent, one he held in his heart until the end, and why it was the fitting place to say goodbye to him on Saturday, January 8, 2022.

In 1976 Brent started in Form I with Fr. Julius as his Form Master. Fr. Julius remained a constant for the Class of 1983 and still does to this day. Fr. Aurel took over from Fr. Julius in Form III, serving and guiding the class through graduation. Fr. Aurel passed away a few years ago. However, Fr. Julius maintained a constant interest and presence in the class and

kept in contact with them all over the years, most importantly with Brent during his illness. It was Fr. Julius who was able to administer last rites for Brent.

It was at Cistercian that Brent met the guys who would become like family, particularly the remaining 16 who graduated together. Time and distance have never mattered. They were and are connected with Brent from both near and far, frequent and infrequent times together and unbreakable bonds forged over more than 45 years of their lives.

After college Brent stayed a great friend to all of his classmates. Time and distance didn't matter to Brent; if you hadn't seen or talked to him for months, when you did, it was as if you had seen him yesterday.

Brent served as class agent, a truly thankless job. He kept tabs on his classmates, organized reunions and squeezed every bit of cash out of them that they could spare for annual scholarship drives.

Brent always made an effort to maintain a relationship with Cistercian. He handled the insurance portfolio for Cistercian, sent his son there and often attended Cistercian sporting events.

The Class of 1983 was able to have one last impromptu class reunion in September. Eleven of 16 classmates were able to attend to honor Brent and meet with him one last time. Fr. Peter, Fr. Julius, Mr. Walter, Coach Haaser, Brent's dad, Mike, and his son, Kyle, were able to attend. Brent loved every minute of it. •

Paul Clevenger '75

Paul Clevenger was born June 5, 1957, and passed away unexpectedly March 17, 2022. Paul joined Cistercian in 1969 for Form III with Mr. Walter as his Form Master. While at Cistercian, Paul was somewhat reserved in a rambunctious



Paul Clevenger '75

class. During school and later, he always joined his class at Tupi's and was ready to share his sense of humor. He consistently earned his place on the Form Master's Honor Roll, lettered in soccer, and, as classmate D.C. Simmons remembers, participated in class discussions with comments such as his deadpan, "How ironic."

One of three members in the class to drive a sporty Mazda RX-3, Paul enjoyed hanging out on Forest Lane with his classmates. Unlike a classmate or two, he even managed to avoid totaling his car before graduation. Early on, Paul showed an exceptional talent in photography, participating in the camera club, newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine. As a sophomore, he won a photography contest sponsored by *The Dallas Times Herald*. In his first year at Notre Dame, he earned a place on the

newspaper staff—and with his "press credentials," he enjoyed access to the field during the Fighting Irish games as well as a front row seat at concert appearances by major bands popular at the time. Two years of freezing winters and ice were enough for Paul to decide to transfer to SMU, where he majored in business with a concentration in real estate. Paul then pursued a law degree, winning the respect of the very demanding professor Joe McKnight, stepfather of classmate and fellow attorney Trip Aldredge. Paul became a highly respected appellate lawyer. Trip writes that he appreciated Paul's "legal acumen and the ability to observe just how absurd clients can be."

Though he first met Michelle Turns in January 2001, Paul realized three months later that she was to be his best friend and soulmate when he was invited to fill out a charter flight to Prague for Michelle's ballet group that was performing for 10 days in an international competition. They were married two years later, on October 4, 2003. Paul loved to read, but no book more than the Bible, according to Michelle. A memorial service was celebrated on May 25 at University Park Methodist Church, where Paul was active and a member of a men's covenant group. •

Class Reunions



Class of '17



Class of '20



Class of '21

Winter Sports

Varsity Basketball finishes 4-3 at SPC

Coming off a season that was limited by COVID to 14 varsity basketball games, head coach **Jack Dorn '05** wanted this year's team to play as much as possible. The squad played 26 games with 17 wins. Their record of 17-9 overall and 4-3 in SPC play was their best showing since 2018-2019. **Luke Rakowitz '22** was named to the All SPC team while leading the Hawks in rebounds and assists and finishing second in points per game. Rakowitz, **Alex Ardemagni '22** and **Oliver**



Matthew Martin '22

Currlin '22 provided steady leadership as captains all season as the team racked up wins, including a win over TAPPS 4A state ranked #5 Colleyville Covenant. This win propelled the Hawks into SPC play and gave them confidence to start conference play 3-0 with wins over Trinity Valley, Oakridge and Fort Worth Country Day. **Colby Mechem '23** led the season in scoring, while **Dan O'Toole '23**, **Bryce Ardemagni '23**

and **Grant Nevitt '24** provided tough guard play allowing the Hawks offense to operate efficiently. **Matthew Martin '22** and **Tarun Senthil Kumar '23** were high-energy players whenever they touched the floor, providing key moments consistently throughout the season. In addition to seniors Rakowitz, Ardemagni, Currlin and Martin, the Hawks will lose **Eli Sanford '22**, **Andrew Murray '22**, **Noah Vetter '22** and **Colin Bildner '22** to graduation. Many of the returning players, however, have multiple years of varsity basketball experience and will provide the Hawks with a strong foundation to continue the success they enjoyed this past season.



Colby Mechem '23

Soccer finishes 2-1 at SPC

After an undefeated championship in 2020-2021, Coach Walsh knew it would be very difficult to defend the title, but he still believed the team would be in the mix. Finishing third in North Zone play matched the Hawks with Austin's St. Andrew's Episcopal in SPC playoffs. The Hawks won 1-0 on a beautiful finish from **Diego Prida '23**. Unfortunately, in the second round, the boys came up short against the eventual champions, Houston Kinkaid. In the final match of the season, the Hawks enjoyed a 1-0 victory over AWTY International when **Santiago Ramirez '22** unleashed a banger to the top corner. The team finished the season with a record of 14-4. The defense was made up of **Marc Maalouf '25**, **Masaki Fraccaroli '22**, **Ryan Smith '23**, and **Conner Roy '22**. The offense was led by all-conference standouts and team MVPs, **Jakob Quarles '22** and **Diego Prida '23**. •



Masaki Fraccaroli '22

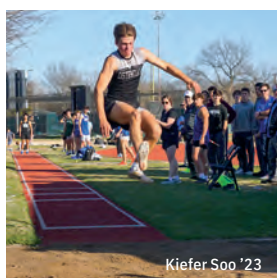


Patrick Garda '24

Spring Sports

Track and Field qualifies for SPC

Cistercian's track and field team entered the 2022 season with high expectations. With new head coach Dennis Harris at the helm, the Hawks performed well in their first meet at Fort Worth Country Day School with throwers leading the team in scoring and overall performances. **Matthew Martin '22**, **Connor Lipscomb '23**, and **Ryan Sporl '24** finished second, third, and fourth respectively in discus to give the team a significant number of points to start the meet. Also performing well were freshman **Bobby Quinn '25**, placing second in the 200m, and **Jacob Brown '24** in the 400m with a first place



Kiefer Soo '23

finish. **Kiefer Soo '23** finished third in the 300 hurdles to round out the crew of medalists.

In the meets to follow, the sprinters began to make a strong run, and the throwers remained consistent at medaling. With dual sport track/baseball athlete **Luke Rakowitz '22** joining the 4x400 relay in week two, the Hawks were tough to beat. The Hawk 4x400 relay won gold at every meet until

John Ferretti '22

the SPC Championship, where they finished fifth overall. Martin and Sporl led the throwers with **Conner Roy '22**, **Charlie Humphreys '24**, and **Cade Burk '25** progressing throughout the season. **Stephen LeSage '23**, after qualifying for SPC in the 800m, joined the 4x400 relay to round out the relay group. **Alex Dabbous '23** also qualified for SPC in the 300 and 110 hurdles. And finally, in Cistercian's home meet, the Hawk 4x100 relay made up of **Nonso Unini '23**, Brown, Rakowitz, and Quinn broke the 16-year-old school record with a time of 43.73.

The Hawks qualified 14 individual athletes to the 2022 SPC Championship meet and look forward to a great season in 2023!

Varsity Baseball batting strong

With leadership from seniors **Alex Ardemagni '22**, **Eli Sanford '22**, **Luke Rakowitz '22** and **Andrew Murray '22**, Cistercian's varsity team enjoyed a successful season. Led by Ardemagni and Sanford on the hill, the Hawks earned a 4-3 record (14-7-1 overall) in conference play with key come-from-behind wins over St. Mark's and ESD to clinch fourth seed in the SPC Championship Tournament.

The first game of SPC vs. Austin St. Andrew's was by far the most exciting game of the season. In the bottom of the seventh with the game tied 2-2, **Stephen Cox '23** led off with a single and Murray followed with a single. With runners on first and second and no outs, **Jamison**



Fr. Raphael Schaner

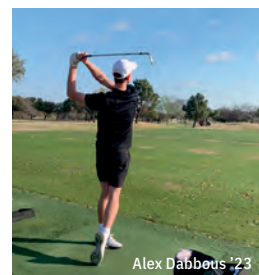
Alex Ardemagni '22

Berard '25 sacrificed the runners over to second and third leaving Rakowitz to double on the first pitch he saw for a 3-2 walk-off win!

The Hawks enjoyed a .324 batting average led by Berard hitting .396, Cox .388, **JP Roppolo '23** .362, **Josh Reaves '24** .333, **Owen Putnam '24** .319, Ardemagni .318 and **Bryce Ardemagni '23** .298. Go Hawks!

Golf team plays four tournaments

The golf team had an outstanding season! **Ryan Smith '23**, **Dan O'Toole '23**, **Colby Mechem '23**, **Alex Dabbous '23**, **Patrick Garda '24** and **Tom Gambow '24** played a total of four tournaments including SPC. The highlight of the season was the ASE Tournament at Hawks Creek Golf Club in Fort Worth. The team finished in fourth place with Smith placing second in individual play. This is the highest tournament placement for Cistercian golf in the past seven years. A bonus is that all six golfers will return next season. Cistercian golf is on the rise!



Alex Dabbous '23

Colby Mechem '23

Tennis team earns big victories

The Hawks displayed great character and unshakable confidence this year despite challenging circumstances. Despite multiple injuries and a 2-5 finish, both doubles teams had one of the best seasons in Cistercian tennis history. Led by **Christopher Hardin '22**, **Ethan Baek '22**, **Cole Boyd '22**, and team MVP **Masaki Fraccaroli '22**, the number one doubles



Fr. Raphael Schaner

Ben Limsenben '22

team went undefeated for the first time in over 10 years, and the number two team went 5-2. Greenhill's only doubles losses in the regular season came at the hands of the Hawks when they swept both doubles matches. Hardin and Fraccaroli played line one, and Boyd and Baek played line two. Their play was nothing less than spectacular.

Because of injuries, the Hawks had to be flexible and play where needed. **John Stigall '23**, **Josh Hays '25**, and **Ben Limsenben '22** also contributed to doubles victories earlier in the season and played well in their singles matches.

Significant singles victories were earned by **Amar Vajja '22**, **John Paul Hays '23**, Fraccaroli (number 1 singles) and **Ryan Fang '24** (newcomer of the year). Vajja won the deciding match against Trinity Valley in a three-set, three-hour marathon to give the Hawks the 3-2 win. Players rushed the court after the last point to congratulate him! Congratulations also to Fraccaroli who won the SPC sportsmanship award and was chosen for the 2021-2022 SPC All-Conference team. His power and speed on the court were outstanding.

Looking forward to 2023, this will be one of the youngest teams with one senior (Stigall) returning to lead a bevy of skilled tournament players coming from our developmental team and a core group of rising freshmen. Go Hawks! •

A path less traveled by...

*"... Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference."*
— Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"

My father once looked at me and said, "You are an obstinate and contrary piece of work."



Smokey Briggs '84

Then he smiled, clapped me on the shoulder, and told me I came by it honestly.

So maybe by nature, or maybe by luck, I have often traveled paths less traveled.

At 56, I have assuredly more time behind me than I have in front of me, which tends to put a man in a reflective mood. As I reflect, I am often grateful I stumbled upon less-trod paths, and followed some of them.

As Mr. Frost said, it has made all the difference.

It was self-imposed, but having graduated Cistercian, I remember well the pressure I felt to succeed.

Being young and naive, a large part of my definition of success in 1984 involved sums of money, professional accomplishments, and social status.

I will state now that this is not an apologia for a less-than-successful life—nor a harangue against the evils of money—and certainly not a recommendation to a life of sloth.

I firmly believe that a father and husband's first duty is to provide. In this day and time, provision requires the earning of money.

So, after a sojourn down the slightly less-traveled path of enlistment, I found my wife Lori, and I became serious about making money, and providing.

Work and college, and college and work, were the order of the day.

It was 1999, and I was a freshly-minted lawyer with a year of practice under my belt, when a less-traveled path opened up before us—the opportunity to publish a small newspaper in the

dusty, and nearly dead, west Texas town of Pecos.

Any fool (even me) could tell that the road to wealth, a lake house, vacations to Europe, or maybe even Oklahoma, probably did not run through Pecos.

We had worked very hard for our education, and the path before us had seemed clear, right up until that moment.

That new path beckoned to me, but was it the call of a munificent universe, or a siren's song luring us to disaster?

I love the newspaper business. Lori and I both enjoy rural life, we enjoy each other's company, and the company of our children.

At that moment in space and time, practicing law was not leaving much time for much other than law.

Still, it was no easy decision. The more traditional path we were on promised financial security, and maybe much more.

For the record, one of the angels whispering in my ear was Dr. Tom Pruitt, and the memory of a conversation we shared once regarding the difference between an avocation, and a vocation, and the joy involved when one's avocation was also one's vocation.

So, with no small amount of trepidation, Lori and I branched off the path we were traveling onto a track less traveled by well-educated, youngish men, with fair-to-middling prospects.

Alas, at this point I do not get to inform you that I was all wrong about the finances of small-town newspapering.

The money has never been free flowing. It has been, however, always enough.

The longer I live, the more certain I am, that enough is plenty. Individually defined, certainly, but knowing what enough is, and being satisfied with enough, is crucial.

There were other rewards—most especially a sense of community and purpose that is not always part of the corporate package, in a locale where the newspaper publisher cannot see

his closest neighbor's porch light while he listens to the coyotes sing from his back porch.

I will not lie to you and tell you that playing small-town newspaper publisher/owner/pressman/gopher is a part-time job. It is very much not part time.

On the other hand I have not really "gone to work" for almost 25 years. It is a rare morning if I leave the house glum, and a rarer evening when I return to the hearth carrying a heavy load.

It happens, but rarely.

My "usual" evening (when things are running smoothly) consists of driving up to the house on a caliche road, hugging my children, kissing my wife, sniffing greedily at whatever she is cooking, and then working with my mule Cole for a bit (often with younger children and their mounts as well), then chores, supper, checking/discussing today's lessons (we homeschool) and bed.

(No, there is no Cistercian out here, nor anything close, and anyway, my first three are of the female persuasion. While we started homeschooling in self-defense, we have found it a delightful enterprise, with its own intrinsic benefits).

While some days and nights are long, the business is not all consuming either, and even better, it is the perfect "family" business.

My children have grown up in our shop, graduating from the "play room," to assembling newspapers and flyers, to the darkroom, the press room, and eventually the newsroom and advertising.

Lori makes sure the books are in order, and occasionally chews out the publisher for poorly documented expenses.

Looking back, the real prize I found on this path was the gift of time—time with my wife and my children (the most important endeavors of my life) and time for the other things I am fond of—vocation and avocations alike.

Enough money, and enough time.

That is what I found on a path less traveled by. •

Community Calendar 2022

August 12

**Mass & reception: Br. Christopher's
Solemn Profession**

August 13

**Mass & reception: Br. Matthew's
Ordination to the Priesthood
and Br. Christopher's Ordination
to the Diaconate**

August 14

**Mass & reception: Fr. Matthew's
First Mass**

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY SCHOOL
3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, Texas 75039

Does Christ Rule History?

While we hoped it would be over quickly, the war in Ukraine continues. Perhaps you will find these thoughts of some help.

Months after the horrors of the Russian-Ukrainian war began and



Fr. Roch Kereszty

Vladimir Putin raised to maximum alert his nuclear arsenal, the entire world is still stunned in disbelief. Why is this senseless pure evil happening?

Christians may also wonder why God is silent? Why does he tolerate the suffering of millions of innocent men and women and children? How dare we Christians maintain that the Kingdom of God is already present among us in a hidden way, when Christ — “the King of Kings” of universal history — does nothing?

Most of us know the conventional answers: that God gave mankind freedom to support or kill each other, to destroy or build up this world; that he allows evil in order to bring about a greater good. Yes, these are true, but not quite satisfactory, answers. We will understand fully the why of evil only

at the last judgement when the dark mysteries of history will be revealed as part of a plan of justice and infinite mercy. Here I can only tell you about how I try to cope with this nightmarish war in my mind and heart.

The events in the Book of Revelation play out on two levels: in the heavenly court of God and on earth. We read about senseless slaughter and destruction on earth and a solemn liturgy with hymns and incense going on in heaven. The two series of events are closely connected: those who endured the great tribulations and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb are the ones who join the heavenly liturgy as kings and priests. In other words, Christ the Lamb of God rules the world by forging saints out of those who share in his sacrifice, the sacrifice of the Lamb. Throughout human history, *fulget crucis mysterium*: “there shines the mystery of the Cross.” In this world, the Cross is the only weapon of Jesus.

Looking now at the horrors of the Ukrainian war, we see how it confronts so many people with the Cross of Christ. On the one hand, the West, to a large extent neo-pagan, addicted to pleasure and wealth, is offered the choice to open their hearts and their homes to several million refugees. Many of those who now

open their homes had ignored God in church and prayer, but now they cannot avoid meeting him in these homeless and desperate strangers.

The Ukrainian soldiers, on the other hand, are called to sacrifice their lives for their country and for each other. For instance, the population of a village formed a live wall of people in front of an incoming tank formation and turned the tanks back. Some of the soldiers knowingly, some of them unknowingly, fulfilled the word of Christ: “No one has greater love than the one who gives his life for his friends.” (John 15:13).

Instead of yielding to depression over the evil and stupidity of the human race, let us pray for the Ukrainians and the Russians that in their own lives and deaths, the Cross of Christ may triumph. At the same time, we can also learn from them that being a Christian does not simply mean being a decent citizen who pays his taxes, doing his work and trying to squeeze as much pleasure as possible out of each day of his life. Thomas More, a Christian saint and statesman, also aspired to squeeze out as much joy from every moment of his life. His joy and peace, however, sprang from his love of God and inspired a joke even before the axe fell on his neck when he put aside his beard and told the executioner, “Don’t cut my beard; it did not commit high treason.” Each one of us may face situations when we need to risk our wealth or even our life for God or for others, and that will be for us the share in the victory of his Cross. •