



The Carolian

The Saint Charles Community Mourns the Loss of Freshman Thomas Knox

QUICK NEWS:

- 3 Powerball jackpot winners split max pot of \$1.5 billion.
- Flint, Michigan water crisis leaves several residences in danger.
- David Bowie passes away at age 69 from his long battle with cancer.

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By Ian George '16

On December 13, 2015, the Saint Charles Community experienced the tragedy of losing our freshman brother, Thomas Knox.

To his family, he was a beloved son and brother who always came home with a smile on his face. To many, he was a considerate, amusing, and exuberant friend.

Thomas represented the qualities every Saint Charles student wishes to achieve: a smart, caring, hard worker who was friends with all. He was an integral part in the success of the hockey team and was admired by those who interacted with him. One thing is for sure — Thomas will be greatly missed.

Provided are some quotes about what Thomas meant his teammates and brothers on the hockey team:

“Thomas and I were both hockey teammates and best friends, and to me, Thomas was my little brother who I knew would always have my back. Thomas and I were going to go on a ski trip together and it would have been the greatest time ever. My day felt better if Thomas had on his huge smile and was when he was laughing it made my heart feel bigger than ever. Thomas and I were in four classes together and we sat next to each other, and during that time I felt great to have

someone like him. Not only a friend, but my best friend and brother.” - Holt Schwarm '19

“Thomas and I met from hockey and 6th period study hall. Thomas and I then became really close and he was my best friend. What happened to Thomas shouldn't have happened, but I guess we all have to go through challenges in life, and this is just one of my challenges. Thomas was one of the nicest people you could ever meet. Whenever you would just look at Thomas in the hallway you just smiled because he was just a good kid. Thomas was always really funny. Thomas' locker was right next to me and it still is, so bearing that I can't see him is the hardest thing to do.” - Grant Erickson '19

“Thomas was everybody's little brother and lit up the room with his contagious smile.” - Connor Kannally '17

“Thomas and I used to always hang out at Chipotle before practice and he would always be over talking to the upperclassmen, but I never really did. They really liked him and he liked them, too. Thomas loved to make other people smile and that is what made him special out of everyone else on the team. He was also a very smart person who if I ever had a problem I would go to him for help. Thomas was such a huge part of the team in that he was a great player but an even better person.” - Matt Martin '19

“Thomas from the first hockey practice onwards fit into the St. Charles brotherhood. He always had a smile on his face that was infectious to us all. He was a little brother to all the upperclassmen on the hockey team. I had the most fun with him on the car rides home when he would play mix tapes of rappers he got at Turkey Hill.” - Alex Brennen '17

“He was a little brother to all of us and not having him there at practices and at games just feels empty. I know things are even harder for the JV team not only because they knew him better but they lost a great hockey player who they simply can't replace. They have to adjust all their gameplay because they have one less forward and they have to go through all that stress while still grieving. Thomas was the happiest kid I knew and he had a smile on his face all the time. But out of all this, Thomas' parents have kept telling us one thing and that is that the impact the Saint Charles community and the Saint Charles hockey team has on people is incredible. Thomas' mother said Thomas was a different kid when he came to Saint Charles and she could never thank us and the school community enough for how happy we made the last few months of his life.” - Aaron Roe '16

Resquias in pace, Thomas.

SC Brotherhood

By Nicholas Arnold '17

Brotherhood. A concept that has not only been at the center of the St. Charles' experience since the school's founding, but has also been brought to the forefront of the St. Charles' community's thoughts through the death of Thomas Knox. For a school which prides itself on being a brotherhood, however, a real definition of the word has never been given. So what then is a brotherhood? The most basic, legal defi-

nition of a brotherhood is "An association, society, or community of people linked by a common goal." To many students at St. Charles, however, the ideals of brotherhood has a deeper meaning than the strictly legalistic definition of the word.

Senior James Sullivan describes brotherhood as, "Men coming together to be greater than themselves."

Junior Rayquon Brown explains it as, "Sharing an experience with

someone to become empathetic to their situation."

Sophomore Will Morrison states it simply has "Having another's back."

Freshman Chris Dixon portrays brotherhood as, "Men working for a single purpose." Brotherhood, although it has various definitions, is an idea that unites the students of St. Charles through a shared pursuit of not only self-betterment, but also the idea that we are one another's brother's keepers.

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy

By Anthony Castrodale '17

Jubilaeum Extraord narium Misericordiae

Misericordes Sicut Pater, Merciful like the Father, is derived from the Gospel of Luke in Christ's *Sermon on the Plain*. Here Jesus instructs his disciples to love their enemies and to forgive as the heavenly Father forgives. This passage has also been chosen to serve as the motto for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, and is the mantra Pope Francis urges us all to adopt.

On Divine Mercy Sunday 2015, His Holiness Pope Francis in his Apostolic Bull (letter) *Misericordiae Vultus*, The Face of Mercy, declared 2015-2016 to be a Jubilee of Mercy for the Universal Church; lasting from December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016. A jubilee in the Church is a period of universal pardon and remission from sin focusing on a central theme; in this case: God's everlasting forgiveness and mercy for all. Jubilees are also referred to as "Holy Years," the Year of Mercy marks the 27th Holy Year in the history of the Church. Ordinary Holy Years occur about every 25 years, but extraordinary Holy Years can break this cycle and be declared at any time. The last Holy Year was

opened by Pope St. John Paul II in 2000 in celebration of the third millennium. Pope Francis has stressed that the Jubilee Year is for the entire Church Universal, not just those in Rome, for God's mercy is extended to all.

In solidarity with the Holy Father and the Diocese of Rome, each Diocese around the world has designated at least one set of *Portas Sanctas*, Holy Doors, often within the Cathedral or another major Diocesan Church. Pope Francis ceremoniously opened the Holy Doors in St. Peter's Basilica on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, officially opening the Year of Mercy. Dioceses around the world opened their own Holy Doors on the Third Sunday of Advent, December 15, 2015. In the Diocese of Columbus, Bishop Campbell opened the Holy Doors located in the back of St. Joseph's Cathedral. The doors are decorated with the Papal and Diocesan Coat of Arms, and recall the Church's need to remain open to all, a precedent of the Second Vatican Council. In his bull, Pope Francis states: "the Holy Door will become a Door of Mercy through which anyone who en-

ters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons, and instills hope." The Church has provisioned that those who pass through the Holy Doors during the Year of Mercy and fulfill the normal requirements of detachment from all sin, receiving the Sacrament of Confession, receiving Holy Communion, and prayer for the Holy Father's intentions are able to gain a Plenary Indulgence. The Holy Doors will remain open in the Cathedral until November 13, 2015; where Bishop Campbell will close the doors and declare the end of the Year of Mercy within the Diocese. The Doors in St. Peter's Basilica will be closed on The Solemnity of our Lord Jesus Christ King of the Universe, officially closing the Jubilee of Mercy.

Throughout the year each Diocese will hold various meetings, lectures, pilgrimages, and liturgies to emphasize the theme of mercy. During this Year of Mercy Pope Francis has also granted certain faculties to forgive cer-



(Continued on the next page...)

The logo for the Year of Mercy.
(Image Courtesy of Google Images)

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy Continued

tain sins to all priests. The first being the ability to forgive the sin of abortion.

When a woman commits an abortion, her and anyone who assisted her automatically receive *latae sententiae* excommunication, which is excommunication incurred by the very nature of the act alone. Since abortion carries with it excommunication, the sin under normal circumstances may only be absolved by a Bishop or one of his designated priests. In the United States, any priest has the faculties to absolve the sin of abortion, but this is not the case in the rest of the world. Therefore as part of the Year of Mercy, the Holy Father has allowed all priests to, “absolve of the sin of abortion those who have procured it and who, with contrite heart, seek forgiveness for it.”

During the Jubilee, Pope Francis has restored the faculty of absolution to priests of the Society of St. Pius X. The priest’s SSPX incurred excommunication in 1988 after Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, their founder, illicitly ordained

four Bishops without the permission of Pope John Paul II. This removed the priests of the SSPX from full-communion with the Church and stripped them of their faculties. In 2009 Pope Benedict lifted the excommunication, and established dialogue between SSPX and the Vatican in hopes to restore them to full communion. Pope Francis declared, that those who approach priests of the Society for confession during the jubilee “shall validly and licitly receive the absolution of their sins.”

Pope Francis has mandated that on March 3-4, 2016 each Diocese will hold a special 24 Hour Penance Service. During the service specially qualified and trained priests called, “Missionaries of Mercy” will be available to hear confessions. These priests will also be given the faculties to absolve severe and special-case sins which normally can only be forgiven by the Holy See’s Apostolic Penitentiary. All of these provisions are motivated by His Holiness’s statement

that, “This Jubilee Year of Mercy excludes no one.”

During this Extraordinary Year of Mercy, let us, the Faithful of the Church, take to heart and put into practice the words of our Holy Father:

“We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a well-spring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”

-- *Misericordiae Vultus*, Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, §2

Interviewing An Athlete: Benigno Houser

By Zach Donley '16

Benigno “D3nigno” Houser is the starting goalie on the varsity lacrosse team and has recently committed to play lacrosse in college. I decided to catch up with him to see what his recruitment was like and how he can help other athletes.

Why all the hustle and bustle going around the halls about you committing to play college lacrosse?

“Because I have committed to play lacrosse at Illinois Wesleyan University which is a rising Division 3 program, but with me as their goalie, we could basically move up and play against Division 1 schools.”

When and why did you choose to commit to this school?

“I chose at the end of October and about a month after my official visit. The rest

of October I took other visits, but none could compare to the vibe and bond that I immediately felt with Illinois Wesleyan University.”

What was the recruiting process like for you and how many D1 colleges were looking at you?

“The recruiting process for lacrosse is terrible and a free-for-all. The process starts during freshman year, and a majority of the recruitment goes on in the East Coast region because the area is famously known for lacrosse. Ohio, on the other hand, is not a great area for being recognized by bigger colleges. I have mountainous amount of D1 schools that were looking at me, but the fit was just not right for me. I initially was going to commit to Dartmouth, but the coach was fired and the new coach didn’t want me.”

Can you put IWU in a nutshell for the unknowing reader?”

The student body is under 3,000 and it’s a small liberal arts university, which means it has different colleges within it. It is in Bloomington, Illinois, which is the headquarters for State Farm. I plan on becoming very close friends with Jake from State Farm and we are going to stay up late at night answering the phones. It is a college town so it is the equivalent of putting Denison in comparison to The Ohio State University.”

What do you plan on majoring in?”

I plan on majoring in either nursing or biochemistry, preparing to go to P.A. school. I truly love helping people so I feel being a male nurse will help me accomplish that. Also, it is a fact that the female nurses outnumber the male nurses 4 to 1. So I plan on meeting many women.”

Best of luck to you in the future!

National Youth Catholic Conference

By Luke Voegele '18

"Here I am, Lord!" For three days, I shared this mantra with over 25,000 other Catholic youth while attending the National Catholic Youth Conference. The conference began on November 19 and was held in Indianapolis, Indiana. Throughout the experience, I made countless friends and even grew closer to old ones. Together we had free reign of Lucas Oil Stadium and the Indianapolis Convention Center. Watching so many people invade the city of Indianapolis for a single purpose was beyond words and the time spent there was life-changing.

On the first day of the conference, the Columbus Diocese and its individual youth groups joined the other dioceses from Ohio and Michigan for a regional Mass. Immediately following the Mass, the attendees were free to roam the adjacent mall and the streets of Indianapolis in order to eat at a restaurant of their choice. Each evening, after eating, the

attendees met in Lucas Oil Stadium for live music, concerts, comedy, dancing, speakers, and on one particular night a spectacular Mass and Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

At the conclusion of each night, participants rode buses back to their respective hotels in the metropolitan area. Each of the following mornings, all 25,000 attendees would meet in the stadium for more music and a keynote speaker. Afterwards the attendees were sent out to spend the day in "breakout sessions." During the breakout sessions, all were free to listen to their choice of many influential speakers, participate in Reconciliation, or spend time in adoration. For those who were seeking more active fun, an area called the thematic park was set aside for interactive booths and games. Here, participants had the opportunity to meet new friends from all over the country, trade hats and other items brought from home, and tag an unsuspecting passerby with clothes pins.

The Nation Catholic Youth Conference began in 1983 as two separate regional conferences: one session in the east coast and one in the west coast. At that time, only a few thousand youth attended NCYC. In 1991, the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry merged the two conferences into a single biennial, national conference. Interest in the conference quickly grew. In fact, NCYC now attracts over 25,000 youth and adults for three days of worship, music, and fun. In 2007, the conference was held jointly in the Nationwide Arena and the Columbus Convention Center. The diocese of Indianapolis has hosted NCYC five times since 1991 and will host the conference once again in 2017 when the new theme will be "Called."

NCYC is a life-changing experience. However, I regret to report that I was the only Saint Charles student to represent the school at NCYC this past year. Our Holy Catholic Church is far more than just religion class or parish activities. To attend NCYC you do not have to be the "ultra-religious" figure that many of us believe we must be. To attend you must simply be open to encountering Christ. I hope to see you at NCYC in 2017!

Doc Interview

By Firas Houssein '16

Dr. Vandermeer, also known as "Doc," journeyed to Dallas, Texas for three weeks and was sorely missed the entire time. While the majority of the faculty and upperclassmen knew of her whereabouts, some students were left wondering where she had gone for such an extended period of time. She describes her trip and its wonderful circumstances below:

"My son and his wife had their first son born to them naturally, and he just turned seven. Then, four years later, they adopted a little boy who was born to a teenage girl who gave him up for adoption. Usually, it takes years to adopt a child; they got one four months later. About a year and a half later, they started to look into adoption again, this time from China. They submitted all their papers last April, thinking it usually takes a little over a year for everything to be processed, when they would fly over to China for a couple weeks. I

told them I would go watch their boys while they did that. Well, as happens with everything with them, instead of a year later they got a notice five months later about a little girl. It then takes about six or eight weeks to clear the paperwork. Then with a week's warning they said they needed me there for three weeks. They packed up and made everything ready and I flew to Dallas and went from teaching Quantum Physics and Mechanics to reading *Cat in the Hat*. The two little boys, Abe and Everett, are seven and three, and it was just fun. We would get up every morning, and Abe would dress and walk to school. Then, I would play with the three-year old for a couple of hours until nap time when I would go get Abe and come home to fix dinner.

Chris and Jennie met Quin three days after they got there. They decided her birthday must be April thirteenth, but they don't know. She was a squalling newborn discovered in a box, wrapped in blanket, on the steps of a public building.

She is an albino, and apparently, they are all but completely rejected in China. They're outcasts. With albinism comes visual problems, but they said they did not mind disabilities. They spent two and a half weeks in China clearing the paperwork.

They then flew back to Dallas with a twenty-month-old who did not sleep on the flights. A whole bunch of us met them at the airport with balloons and signs, and then I had to fly home the very next morning. I still got to play with her and hold her that night, and she is just a very sweet little girl. We flew out to spend Christmas with them, and then it was hard to come home.

Sometimes people wonder and are almost afraid to ask: can I love somebody else's child, or does this come with biology? The answer is that it does not come with biology. Chris said he wondered this too when they went to adopt Everett, but when they put that child in his arms, that was it: he was smitten. It was the same when I met him and later Quin; you love them, and it doesn't matter where they came from."

Top Ten Rap Albums of 2015

By JeanLuc Paul '16

Editor's Note: This is the first five albums chosen by the writer. The next five will be released in the next Carolian.

Rap is one of the most defining genres of our time. Whether it is anger, love, or sadness, the rhythm and rhyme of hip-hop displays a variety of emotions. Lists are a great way to organize things, especially in nice round numbers like ten. Put those two together and BOOM, my top ten rap albums of 2015.

DISCLAIMER: MUSIC IS RELATIVE AND LISTS ABOUT MUSIC ARE ARBITRARY IN NATURE

That being said here is an arbitrary list about music.

10.) WHAT A TIME TO BE ALIVE- DRAKE & FUTURE

Often times in history, two men come together to accomplish great things: Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong, Kobe and Shaq, Walter White and Jesse Pinkman. In October of this year, Drake and Future merged to become another illustrious historical duo. Reminiscent of Kanye West's and Jay-Z's *Watch The Throne* (while not as good) *What a Time to be Alive* does feature two successful rappers in their primes delivering a litany of club bangers like "Jumpman" and "Big Rings". Unfortunately, there was a lot of hype surrounding this album, hype that the album fails to live up to. Altogether the project feels rushed, especially since Drake and Future worked on it in only six days. The whole is less than the sum of their parts, both of the rappers individual works rank higher on this list than their collaboration.

9.) DIRTY SPRITE TWO- FUTURE

Future's third album is "sensational" littered with great songs like "Commas" and "Where Ya At". With the help of his go-to producer, Metro Boomin, Future delivers his best work to date. Before DS2, Future was criticized for two things, his repetitiveness and his lack of substance. Future rectifies these complaints on DS2. He keeps the catchy hooks and injects substance with revealing and personal lyrics. Future's

uniqueness comes from his flow. Mumbled and hurried, but somehow entrancing, Future always keeps your head bobbing. His flow pairs well with the hard hitting trap beats. Conversely, Future's flow is also his downfall. The muttered lyrics delivered quickly can sometimes be confused as the incomprehensible ramblings of a drug addict. In the end, you have to appreciate Future for what he is: a trap rapper. Like it or not, trap was an integral part of hip-hop in 2015, and DS2 was a major reason why.

8.) DARK SKY PARADISE- Big Sean

Way way up, I feel blessed. Big Sean released his second studio album in February of 2015. The album addressed the death of Big Sean's grandmother and his coping with fame. Produced almost entirely by Kanye West, Yeezy's influence can be felt throughout the album, and especially in tracks like, "One Man Can Change the World". The album's dark tone gives way to personal tracks with a lot of emotion. *Dark Sky Paradise* seems to be all about balance. Big Sean has always rapped arrogantly. Generally, his extravagant tastes can come off as gaudy, but on *Dark Sky Paradise*, he finds the right balance of extravagance and tastefulness, humility and boastfulness. Finding this balance was the key to pulling off the album. *Dark Sky Paradise* contrasts the opulence of fame with the tragic nature of life. Big Sean shows his evolution as a rapper by balancing the slower more emotional tracks (I know, Paradise) with the ramped up bangers (IDFWU, Blessings). Big Sean shared parts of himself with the world in 2015, and the world thanks him for it.

7.) THE INCREDIBLE TRUE STORY- LOGIC

Combining a great rap album with an interesting science fiction story, Logic's sophomore effort is his best yet. While the space story (supplied through interludes) provides a fun distraction, the meat of the album are the songs. Logic picks up right where he left off, continuing to bring the heat with his aggressive full throttle flow. Logic excels because even though he rhymes alarmingly fast

everything he says is crystal clear and easy to understand. Logic maintains masterful control of his flow, which makes him very adaptable. While Logic's delivery is often times more suited to a faster production style, his control allows him to rap over slower more soulful beats. What makes *Incredible True Story* different from Logic's previous album is the production. In order to match the album's theme, the production reflects happier more upbeat emotions (hope, excitement, joy etc.). Logic came through with one of the best albums of this year.

6.) RODEO- TRAVIS SCOTT

Don't you open up that window. Released early September, Travis Scott's latest album is the zenith of a rap career that has been several mixtapes in the making. Scott's latest work *Rodeo* is a continuation of his earlier mixtapes while simultaneously being a change in form. The production style is the same, yet Scott's flow is more methodical and purposeful. The combination of Scott's warble, auto tuned, dizzying production (reminiscent of *808's and Heartbreaks*) and commanding flow tends to slow time. Tracks that are three minutes long feel like they're five minutes long, as if Scott gave you a blue pill into the matrix or sent you down the rabbit hole with Alice. Unfortunately, Travis Scott's lack of lyricism is at a disconnect with his production. While the album is an amazing listen, a lack of variation and a short track list keep it from being the best of this year.



Albums covers for *Dark Sky Paradise* and *Dirty Sprite 2*. (Images Courtesy of Google Images)

The Force Awakens Review (The Prequel)

Editor's Note The latest edition of the *Star Wars*' franchise, *The Force Awakens*, was so intriguing that two of the *Carolain's* movie critics decided to review the movie and give their opinion of the newest chapter.

By Marcus Galeano '16

In my humble opinion, 2015 offered two excellent science fiction movies on the opposite ends of their respected spectrums: the ultraviolent, fast-paced action of *Mad Max: Fury Road* and the reserved, psychologically enthralling nature of *Ex Machina*. Naturally, it would only be fair to compare *The Force Awakens* against those two films. Is it as brutal and unrelenting as *Fury Road*? Not quite. Is it as thought-provoking and brilliantly written as *Ex Machina*? Not even close. But *The Force Awakens* has them beat for two reasons. They're the same elements that made the original trilogy as great as it was, and why the absence of those made the prequels as bad as they are. In the briefest possible summary, *The Force Awakens* is as good as it is because above all, it's compelling and fun.

Many of the reasons for the film's aforementioned qualities must be owed to J.J. Abrams. As a filmmaker, Abrams has three qualities that make him great for *The Force Awakens*: he loves *Star Wars*, his style of filmmaking flourishes in the sci-fi and sci-fi action genres, and he is a great mimic of the tone and structure of other, often times better, mov-

ies (i.e. *Super 8*, *Mission Impossible 3*, etc.). Bearing the last point in mind, it shouldn't surprise most people that *The Force Awakens* borrows more than a little influence in tone and plot from George Lucas and *A New Hope*. That last part seemed to have bothered some people, but I've come to realize that the only way you could ensure a success for this is to give people a synthesis of old and new, a task which Abrams pulls off extremely well in what is far and away his best film thus far.

If the film does have a weakness, it's that the climax doesn't feel quite as epic as I felt it should have been. The most glaring reason for this is the fact that *The Force Awakens* borrows most of its plot from *A New Hope*, in which every scene of the film led up to the epic climax of the destruction of the Death Star. However, in *The Force Awakens*, the story structure is created with a sense of trepidation with its character development instead of continuing to lead up to the climax. This is mainly done to ensure that the characters we get stuck with for this new trilogy are engaging and likeable, most likely out of fear of repeating the mistakes of the prequels. Be that as it may, those efforts do ultimately pay off in creating characters that are three-dimensional, compelling, and do have a sense of fun and light-heartedness about them. Daisy Ridley's Rey serves as both a strong, funny protagonist who possesses a true sense of

strength but also an emotional fragility that makes her interesting. John Boyega's Finn exudes a great everyman personality as someone caught way in over his head by his own good intentions, but that doesn't stop him from being extremely humorous and relatable at all the right times. Adam Driver's Kylo Ren is a solid villain, able to be as intimidating as Darth Vader when necessary but also able to be interesting in his moral and emotional conflicts, particularly in one major decision in the third act that you couldn't pay me to spoil. The returning *Star Wars* characters – Luke, Han, Leia, etc. – are all integrated just enough to scratch the nostalgic itch, but not to the point that they overshadow the stories of the new protagonists. However, the definite standout in the new cast has to be Oscar Isaac's Poe Dameron, who ends up stealing just about every scene he's in, due to his natural easy-going nature and charisma. Isaac is a very good actor, one of the many things I learned from his performance in *Ex Machina*, but this is the first time he's had a chance to shine in a big, money-making film like this, and this role, like Harrison Ford with Han Solo in the original trilogy, might be the one that launches Isaac into superstardom.

I'll be the first to admit that this review might be more subjective than objective. I was practically raised with the original trilogy, and those movies were an undeniably large part of my childhood. But putting aside all the nostalgia and lightsabers and blasters and black-clad villains and space battles, what I can say is that *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* is an awesome, visceral, engaging, fun space romp. Additionally, the series will probably only get better in Episode VIII, especially due to a better director in Rian Johnson, director of the great *Looper* and some of the best episodes of *Breaking Bad*. For better or worse, *Star Wars* is back. And it looks good.

Rating: 3.5 out of 4 stars



Two of the new characters introduced in *The Force Awakens*, Kylo Ren and BB-8. (Images Courtesy of Google Images)

The Force Awakes Review (The Sequel)

By Jacob Diley '16

Star Wars has been the epitome of sci-fi and maybe even of all movies ever since it debuted. The original trilogy dominated the late 70s and early 80s, with its charm, twists, and eye candy. Then the prequel trilogy came when we were all kids, with its exposition-dumping, boring dialogue and questionable acting, and it sort of put a bad taste in people's mouths when they thought of "Star Wars" (although, as a diehard fan, I can admit that they really were not that bad. Episode 3 remains one of my favorites.) Enter, "The Force Awakens," the first in this new trilogy. The title is appropriate because as well as the Force, Star Wars itself has been reawakened and revived to its original glory. It has saved the future of Star Wars as well as satisfied the past fans of the series.

First, let's talk characters. These new characters are great. There's Rey (Daisy Ridley), a brave and talented scavenger from Jakku with a mysterious past. From the beginning, she is set up as the protagonist of this new trilogy. She changes much throughout the movie as she confronts all these new situations and it will be fun to see how much more she grows in the future. There's Finn (John Boyega), an ambitious rogue Stormtrooper who wants to do some good. He is a sort of unlikely hero as he never is really confident and is still trying to find out how he fits into everything by the time the movie ends. There's also Poe Dameron (Oscar Isaac), the best Resistance pilot in the fleet with a quick wit and enduring loyalty. He is extremely likable and exudes this sort of friendliness and bravery that makes you want to never stop rooting for him. Along with him is BB-8, his droid companion that has much emotion and spirit for a droid. All these heroes serve their own part in the story and each has something to give. The actors who portray them, even though they are mostly no-names, do an excellent job.

My favorite new character has to be the villain, Kylo Ren (Adam

Driver). Ren is possibly the most complex, well-written, and emotionally-driven villain Star Wars has ever seen. I loved everything about him, from his threatening appearance to his internal conflicts, from his awesome lightsaber to his relentless devotion to Vader. He enters the movie and immediately you understand the fear that he spreads across the galaxy. But as the movie progresses, he opens up more and his struggles are revealed. These semi-sympathies you feel for Ren are soon dashed, however, in the final act, giving you a reason to hate him come the beginning of the next movie.

As for the old characters, they add to the experience as much as they made me squeal in excitement. The surprise of the movie has got to be Han's return. This isn't a rusty, old Harrison Ford pretending to be Han Solo. This *is* Han Solo, the same smirking smuggler you remember. Solo steals the scenes just as much as (if not more than) the new guys and is such a great part in this movie.

The plot of *The Force Awakens* is great. It's set up beautifully in the opening crawl and Abrams does a great job of keeping a good pace and telling an interesting story. Everything that happens feels natural and not forced. Each scene was engaging and informative where it needed to be. The plot delivered plenty of twists that left my head spinning. Also, the cinematography was amazing, delivering some of the best shots in the entire franchise. I tip my hat to Abrams for a wonderfully put together film.

A key part to the greatness of this movie is the return to the old Star Wars. Moving away from the darker, dryer themes of the prequels, this episode returns to the fun of the originals. It is definitely the funniest Star Wars movie. The scenes are filled with exciting battles and exhilarating chases. And when the action does give way to dialogue, it's not clunky and full of exposition. The music of the mastermind John Williams returns to fully immerse you in the experience. It's a thrilling return to old.

However, there is some baggage that comes with these returns. The biggest flaw in this movie is that in addition to being a reboot of the franchise, it is basically a remake of the original movie. From the lonely protagonist from a sand planet to the new

giant space station, there are way too many similarities to ignore. While I understand that they were trying to retell a story for a new generation, I really was hoping for more of an expansion of the universe rather than the same old story. I wanted to see what new kind of story Abrams could tell. But instead, I basically got a shinier version of *New Hope*. Yet at the same time that it reuses plot points, it does so in its own unique way. The similarities are apparent enough to notice, but they don't make the movie any less fresh than it is.

Another minor way I was let down by Abrams was with his ability to world-build. Lucas was very successful with coming up with these different planets with different habitats and species and social systems. In this movie, two of the planets feel the same and the only real insight into the culture of a planet we get is on Jakku. Quite frankly, I couldn't tell you anything about the other locations. This continues on my complaint that this movie doesn't seem to add much to the Star Wars universe.

All that being said, I still praise Abrams for his storytelling ability. By using practical effects, he created a living setting for the story that makes everything so believable and captivating. You can tell by watching this movie that he is a true Star Wars fan, and that is the best thing you can wish out of a director. He also is great with keeping the audience thinking even as they walk out of the theater. This movie ended with me asking more questions than I entered with. Like who is Snoke exactly? Who are Rey's parents and where did they go? What has Luke been doing all these years? It's these questions that will make me first in line on the opening day of Episode VIII.

So, was it worth the hype? Absolutely. *The Force Awakens* fulfills all the hopes and desires of fans and breathes new life into the franchise. The saga feels young again. So much potential from a group of great new actors. So many new questions about that galaxy far, far away. After almost 40 years, Star Wars continues to amaze audiences as it pulls them into the deep lore of the franchise. Even though there are way too many similar plot points, it still has a uniqueness to it. Overall, it's the fun and exciting situations and the rich new characters that make Episode VII a worthy addition to the best movie saga of all time.

Rating: 8.8 out of 10 stars

Jar Jar Binks: Sith Lord?

By Ray Duffy '19

Many Star Wars fans despise Jar Jar Binks, protesting that he is a perfect example of how bad the prequel trilogy is. Most fans agree that yes, Jar Jar is immensely annoying even to the point of ruining scenes of the movie. However, a recent theory that has surfaced on the internet implies much more- that Jar Jar Binks is a Sith Lord. This theory could explain multiple plot holes in the prequel trilogy,

especially the swift introduction of Count Dooku and General Grievous, both of whom were never mentioned before in the films. Also, Jar Jar appears to be a powerful user of the force, seeming to influence the speech of characters at many points in the movies. He also looks to be an experienced user of the Jedi mind trick, waving his hands at multiple crucial points in the movie, such as when he becomes Senator and then a general. His immense clumsy luck in combat could be at-

tributed to his affinity for the dark side. Will we ever know the answer? Most likely not, but the theory is certainly interesting to think about.



(Jar Jar Binks telling it like it is. (Image Courtesy of Google Images))

The Tradition of Celebrating the New Year

By Cyrus Lloyd '17

Another year has come and passed, and once again we find ourselves celebrating the inevitable passage of time with fireworks, parties, and resolutions for the New Year. While the simple turning of the years, the passing of an arbitrary date which has no actual significance, may seem no cause for celebration, it is a tradition that predates nearly all modern holidays and unifies all cultures.

The first evidence of a New Year's celebration came four thousand years ago in ancient Babylon. Of course, the date of the celebration was not January 1st, instead the eleven day festival began on the first new moon following the spring equinox, in modern day late March. They

called it Akitu, and during it, they celebrated not only the beginning of the New Year but also the victory of the sky god Marduk over the evil sea goddess Tiamat. The culmination of the celebration came on the last day, when the Babylonians either crowned their king or renewed the king's mandate of heaven.

The date would differ between nations in years, normally on a date of astronomical significance. The Persians celebrated on the spring equinox with 13 days of feasts, and gift giving; the Ancient Egyptians on the first day of the star Sirius was visible after a 70 day absence, a date which corresponded with the annual flooding of the Nile, with drunken revelry; the Chinese on the first day of the Spring planting season, with colorful decorations and loud noises to scare off

the bloodthirsty creature Nian.

It was the Romans who would first celebrate the New Year on January 1st, with the institution of the Julian calendar in 44 BC. The date was changed from the traditional spring equinox to honor the god of beginnings Janus, from whom January takes its name. This god has two heads, one looking back at the old, one looking ahead to the new, tying it to the celebration of the New Year.

It is a meld of these ancient traditions which make up our modern day celebrations: New Year's resolutions from ancient Babylon, fireworks from 10th century China, and the occasional exchange of gifts from ancient Rome. Celebrations vary across the world too, from the Spanish tradition of eating 12 grapes to the Thai firing guns to frighten off demons. Yet

is on the night of December 31st where people are united unlike any other, while the world waits as one for midnight.



(Hundreds of thousands of people gather in Times Square to celebrate the coming of the new year. (Image Courtesy of Google Images))



(Individuals in Thailand Celebrate New Years. (Image Courtesy of Google Images))

Climate Change editorial

By Liam O'Reilly '19

Our world is often changing, and not always for the better. A topic that world leaders, scientists, and commoners alike have been debating is that of climate change. On November 30th, 2015, a group of leaders from around the world met in Paris to debate and negotiate an agreement on the topic of climate change.

Although the climate has always been changing, it has been rapidly changing in recent times. This is result of many things that we do as humans. One of the biggest causes of climate change is carbon dioxide emissions from burning fossil fuels and gasoline that we often use in our world. Another large cause is methane emissions from animals, such as cows. These things cause the cli-

mate to change.

With the climate changing, it is mostly the average temperature around the world going up. Some people may not think this is a big deal, with just the side effects being warmer weather. There is more to it than that though. The warmer weather causes the ice caps to melt, which raises the sea levels, which can devastate coastal towns and small island nations.

In Paris, these leaders wanted to negotiate to an agreement on how to reduce the climate change. In the end, they ended up with the Paris Agreement. This was an agreement to try to keep global warming to less than two degrees Celsius. This means reducing emissions of greenhouse gasses such as the ones mentioned earlier.

The hopes of this agreement is to help save the world as we know it. If global warming goes over those two degrees, it could cause massive changes in our world. We won't be able to tell if this agreement will hold true anytime in the near future. It will take many many years to see if it will happen. Until then, we will have to wait and see.



(Leaders from all around the world met in November to discuss the topic of climate change. (Image Courtesy of Google Images))

When Lightning Strikes

By William Hannah '17

Editor's Note: This is the second part of a short story that was first released in an earlier edition of The Carolian.

The bolt hit her father in the chest and sent him flying back from the impact like a ragdoll. Hitting the wall, the chair under him shattered to bits.

Maria felt the electricity well up as if from some inner source. The man shrieked and let go of her. She did not understand why, only that she wouldn't waste her chance. She ran, and ran, until her legs finally gave out.

She left town that day and headed north. A few days later, she wandered into a town she did not know. Settling into an alley to rest, she hoped it would bring her respite from the event at her household.

It did not.

That night she dreamt something strange: she stood before a woman on a throne, who had pale skin, light blonde hair, and ice blue eyes. This twig like woman wore a simple blue dress and matching gloves, with no adornments. Her throne twisted into the sky, spiraling into the heavens. The throne was made of icicles, which gave the room an overwhelming amount of powerful energy.

"Greetings Maria." She spoke in broken Latin, as if it wasn't her primary language. "You are my successor, and the second of us to walk the earth."

"What are you talking about?" Maria asked, completely confused. "And how do you know my name?"

"I see all. It is what I do now. Be warned that your life will have complications like no other life before. The event with your father was only the first." She waved her hand and the scene

changed. It was now a wedding, in a style unfamiliar to Maria. People were speaking an unknown language and sharing confusing customs. The mysterious woman sat talking at a table with a glass goblet in her hand. She held the glass in an ungloved hand.

When she turned, the glass-- no longer hidden by shadows-- was covered in ice. Several people gasped and a woman screamed. She dropped the glass, and tried to make a run for the door.

Several armored men with swords quickly surrounded the woman. They placed her in handcuffs. The scene dissolved around Maria and the woman.

"Elementalist"

(To be continued...)

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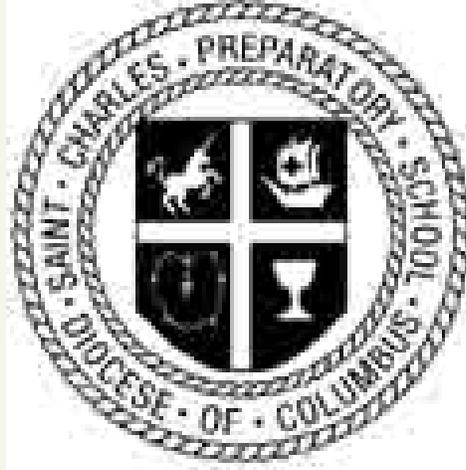
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