

# The Round Table

#roundtable since 1853

VOL. CCXXVIII, NO. 1

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

roundtable.beloit.edu

## Wisconsin Lawmakers Seek to Regulate Construction of AI Data Centers

NEWS

By ETHAN COOPER and VIVIAN KOPKA

As of Jan. 26, Microsoft has been approved to build 15 new data centers in Mt. Pleasant, WI. The village committee unanimously voted on Microsoft's plans for the former Foxconn manufacturing complex.

Shortly after, on Jan. 29, Quality Technology Services (QTS) pulled out of plans for construction outside Madison in DeForest, after pushback from

local officials.

On the state level, representatives are struggling to institute regulations and safeguards against rising emissions and energy costs, as tech giants like Microsoft and Meta continue to sink billions of dollars into data centers across the country.

In Wisconsin, the legislative session is at its end, and adjournment is near.

As they face the second year of the session, lawmakers are anxious to get proposals passed before the midterm. This has proven especially difficult for Wisconsin's divided state government.

Assembly Bill (AB) 840 is a bill which would have utility regulators ensure that customers of any service who choose to operate these data centers would not have to bear the costs of their construction. The bill also mandates a water recycling system to reduce consumption and to clean up the plot if the project is terminated. Spearheaded by Republican lawmakers, AB840 was rushed through assembly merely 11 days after it was introduced. It passed by a 53-44 majority vote on Jan. 20, and was split almost cleanly between party lines.

There are myriad concerns from homeowners and politicians in areas of potential data center campuses, but also many

praises of job creation and other financial benefits.

The proposal has been criticized on the left for lacking several critical components, and interest groups such as labor unions and the Wisconsin Sierra Club have lobbied against it.

Labor unions have expressed concern over the absence of prevailing wage protections, and Democratic representative Darrin Madison said in a statement that "It provides no guarantees that the jobs created will be safe and well-compensated, much less union. Wisconsin badly needs those good-paying, safe, union-protected jobs."

Another major disagreement stems from a provision in the bill which would limit the usage of renewable energies to on site constructions. This would mean a majority of the energy consumed would come from fossil fuels.

Republicans say this is because the amount of energy required to sustain a hyperscale data center will have to be transferred from elsewhere in the state or region. At a press conference, Republican Assembly Speaker Robin Vos explained, "this bill actually says that if you're going to do renewable energy — and we would encourage them to do that — it has to be done on site. So it'll require significantly less transmission, less disruption of the public, and hopefully less overall land as they have it around the region as opposed to just putting it right where that data center is going to go."

The bill has ended up in the Republican-controlled Senate, and whether or not it will reach the governor's desk remains to be seen. However, Democratic governor Tony Evers seems poised to shoot it down regardless.

Read the rest on page 2

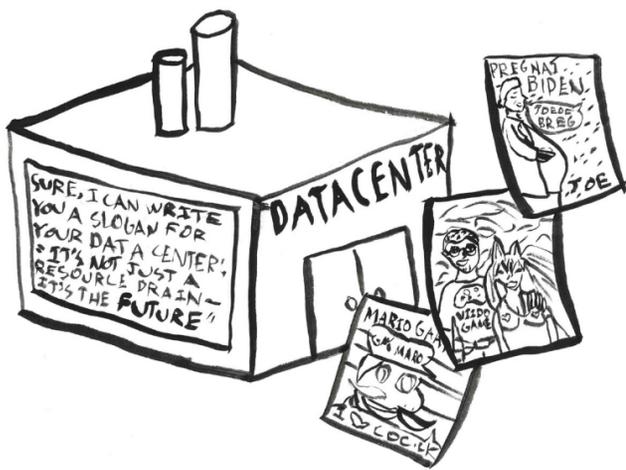


Illustration by Betty Cavicchia '28

## Beloit College Substance Support

Do you find yourself drinking or smoking alone, unable to stop even with the expectations of classes and life weighing on your shoulders? Do you feel alone in this experience, wanting to find others like yourself, and a safe, anonymous space to share your struggles?

We welcome you and others affected by substances to our weekly support group to enjoy free coffee, hugs, and support. This invitation goes out to not only those who are addicts, but also those who have had addiction affect their lives through family, friends, and alike. This is a community made for and by those who suffer from addiction or have been affected by it.

We will be hosting this group on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights from 7-8 p.m. in the Stutz Classroom near the HWC. Information that connects addicts with elders with decades of experience will be provided, as well as researched methods on how to live life with clarity from substances. This group is being hosted by Ava Tedesco (tedescoae@beloit.edu) and Tess Hunter (huntertg@beloit.edu), and we welcome any and all questions and concerns related to this new and exciting opportunity for Beloit College students.

An advertisement for Gallery AABA. At the top, it says "LATEST SPECIAL" and "DAILY REPORT". Below that, "Gallery AABA" and "VOL. 1, NO. 1 TO ALL ARTISTS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, POETS 26 JANUARY 2026". The main headline is "CALLING FOR CREATIVES". Below the headline is an illustration of a woman and a child looking at a red rotary phone. Text on the right says: "Ring Ring... We are looking for Artists, Photographers, Poets on campus". Below that: "Answer our call and join us in a vintage themed exhibition. Open to creatives who are ready to showcase and/or sell their work at the Gallery." A "DEADLINE: February 14" is listed. At the bottom right is a QR code and the text "APPLY NOW!".

## Dance from Screen to Stage: 2026 Ferrall Artist Gabriel Gonzalez

NEWS

By LIO KAMUELLER



Via Beloit College

In this digital age, rapidly developing technology offers new tools and landscapes for art. This year's Ferrall Artist-in-Residence, Gabriel Bruno Eng Gonzalez '20, took advantage of this in his creative work during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, using the socially isolated computer screen as a stage.

He uses webcams, split screens, and technological difficulties or glitches to give the appearance of the viewer participating and to allow the audience's attention to wander, involving them in the process of "active editing" during the performance. The sense of isolation present in this work is also essential.

In his recent keynote address, Gonzalez discussed how "this work started very queerly," drawing inspiration from feelings of otherness and working in the margins, as well as artistic expressions of states of identity and being that are not fully defined. Post-pandemic, Gonzalez has

translated this style of choreography into live performances. Some of the elements remain the same, such as repeated phrases of choreography and video loops playing particular sections during the performance.

Gonzalez incorporates physical screens in a similar way to the use of multiple "tabs" in his digital work — performers move with green screens and TV monitors to play looping clips or create blind spots.

This style demands an active viewing from the audience, as it involves "viewers' choice and decision making about where to look and how to take in the piece" based on its complex and layered structure. While Gonzalez's original work with these aesthetics was "meant to be experienced through the screen," its emergence into live, in-person performance opens opportunities for collaboration, in addition to "existing

in some sort of realm between the online and IRL," as digital aesthetics begin to move off the screen.

The process of collaborative creation is a large part of what Gonzalez is exploring with his work at Beloit this semester.

Throughout the week, he is holding open rehearsals for anyone interested in dancing, viewing, or having input on the performance.

He creates some of his choreography in collaboration with performers, and all experience levels are welcome.

As an alumnus of the college, Gonzalez's project here will incorporate the aesthetics of old and new Beloit, athletics, and their relationship to performing and the arts.

Open rehearsals will be held every weeknight this week at 7:30 p.m. in Hendricks Center Studio 1. The final performance will be at the same time and location on Feb. 6, with additional performances at Chelonia.

### NEWS

TPUSA MEETING

By E E AND V  
Page 2

PROTESTS IN IRAN

By DEMIR  
Page 3



### FEATURES

TIK TOK NEW OWNERS

By KEEGAN

WISCO WINTERS

By EDITOR SONYA  
Page 4

### ARTS

IRONSING THOSE LUNGS

By Claire  
Page 5

### SPORTS

SUPERB OWL

By Heein McHoin  
Page 6



### OP-ED

EVERYONE LOOKS QUEER NOW

By LYDIA

THIN LIZZY ROCKS!!!

By PEEIN MCPPOIN  
Page 7

IN PRINT AND IN DIGITAL  
roundtable.beloit.edu

INSTAGRAM  
@beloitroundtable

ROUND TABLE RADIO  
MONDAYS 8 p.m.

Round Table

The Round Table provides a balanced, creative, newspaper for the Beloit College community. Our student-run organization is an outlet for its members to juggle truth and integrity with vividly and humor.

February 3, 2026  
Volume 228, Number 1

Editors-In-Chief

Vivian Kopka  
Ella Silva

News Editor

Elisa Turner

Features Editor

Sonya Edwards

Arts Editor

Claire Winter

Sports Editor

Elliot Ave-Lallemant

Back Editor

Quinn Annis

Graphics Editor

Betty Cavicchia

Copy Editor

Ruby Baudhuin

Web Editors

Theo Bjornstad  
Asher Blumenthal

Content Editor &  
Round Table Radio  
Producer

Cian McKeown

Staff Writers

Jeffrey Battle  
Romina Palomeque  
Alivia Renteria  
Alex Cambouris  
Keegan Dewitt  
Theo Bjornstad  
Palash Mamtaney  
Demir Kasapoglu  
Lio Kammueler  
Kimberly Pilon  
Quinn Annis  
Sonya Edwards  
Keira Linton  
Ethan Cooper

Contributing Writers

Lydia Williams  
Vanessa Skildum

Print is Dying

The Round Table editorial board pride ourselves on providing an entirely student-run news and editorial source for the Beloit College community.

The content of each issue is neither reviewed nor approved by college faculty or administration before it goes to print.

The Round Table prides itself on producing content of the highest quality and integrity. All stories will be covered with the greatest degree of impartiality possible, resulting in a fair and balanced presentation of the news.

If you find an error, please send an email to [roundtable@beloit.edu](mailto:roundtable@beloit.edu) with "CORRECTION" in the subject line, or submit a Letter to the Editors at [roundtable@beloit.edu](mailto:roundtable@beloit.edu)

CONTACT

[roundtable@beloit.edu](mailto:roundtable@beloit.edu)  
[kopkavl@beloit.edu](mailto:kopkavl@beloit.edu)  
[silvaer@beloit.edu](mailto:silvaer@beloit.edu)

The Round Table meets every Tuesday at 9 p.m. in Pearsons.

# Wisconsin Lawmakers Seek to Regulate Construction of AI Data Centers

By ETHAN COOPER and VIVIAN KOPKA

CONT'D FROM FRONT

This battle emphasizes the deep divisions in regulatory discourse. Wisconsin Democrats have released a bill proposal of their own. The proposal would include tax breaks for centers which rely on at least 70% renewable energy, a number that republicans repudiate as unrealistic.

As lawmakers continue to weigh spending against renewable energies, many see a pressing need to pass strong legislation. Absent a cohesive legal framework, companies invested in AI have been able to build data centers with near impunity, a source of discontent for clean energy advocates.

Assembly representative and gubernatorial candidate Francesca Hong has called for a statewide moratorium on the construction of new data centers until the state has enough research to ensure job creation and sustainability. Hong cites pushback against the creation of data centers in communities such as Caledonia as democratic resistance to an unresponsive legislature, stressing the need to put communities before profit.

"They're holding their elected officials accountable. It is important that we respond, listen, and answer to what people are demanding around the state," said Hong in a statement, adding, "There is not

enough data on AI data centers. But what we do know is that in places like Illinois or Virginia, we're seeing tens of millions of

dollars in tax revenue essentially be given out as corporate subsidies and not invested back into communities."



BizTimes

# Beloit Urban Gardens Takes Root

By ALEX CAMBOURIS

On Jan. 29, Beloit Urban Gardens had its first meeting since 2023. BUG, as it is called, is a campus club dedicated to the growth and maintenance

of the various gardens here on campus. For those of us with a green thumb, this club offers a particularly exciting opportunity. BUG works with the Outdoor

Environmental Club (OEC) to organize events and planting locations, germinate seeds, and build up the Beloit community. They are committed to herbal research and environmental sustainability.

BUG is also a creative environment to meet and work with new people. BUG encourages students from all disciplines to participate, as many fields of study are necessary. From engineering to philosophy, all disciplines have the potential to play an important role. BUG follows a code of honor similar to that of pirates. Every member on board has an important role to play, such as the quartermaster, who keeps inventory of seeds and supplies, or the treasurer, who controls funds. Beloit

student Kaden Sako'29 is the current captain of the "ship," but despite his title, Sako stresses the importance of equality and tolerance of everyone's opinions and ideas. An election will be held on Sunday, Jan. 8 at 7:30 p.m. to appoint roles to all the members.

BUG also works with Bon Appetit, and this year they are hoping to supply vegetables and hot sauces to the campus. This is an interesting and delicious opportunity which we are all looking forward to. BUG works to embrace humanity's connection with nature and create an environment built on green energy and forward thinking. As BUG captain Kaden Sako said, "The world is there to be changed for those who want to change it."



Beloit College

# Harsh Crackdowns on Protests in Iran

By DEMIR KASAPOGLU

Over 30,000 Iranians are dead and tens of thousands have been arrested as protests continue in Iran. This is the largest mass uprising in Iran since the 1979 revolution which put the current government in place.

Initially sparked by a fall in the Rial, protests quickly spread across the country for the overthrow of the government. Protests in Tehran, the capital, have been especially active. According to Iran International, over 1.5 million protesters took to the streets on Jan. 8. That same night, the internet was cut nationwide.

The government responded harshly, using live ammunition, tear gas, beatings, and torture against protesters. Footage online showed dozens of body bags piling up inside and outside of hospitals as they struggle to keep up with the number of injured. Due to the cut in internet, many international organizations fear the true number of injured and dead to be much higher than they know.

On Jan. 9, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei labelled protesters as "terrorists" and said they were "mercenaries serving foreign powers." At the time of writing, the Iranian government has put the death toll at 3,117, of

whom 2,447 were civilians and security forces, and the rest were terrorists. Khamenei has acknowledged the minimum death toll, however, he blamed the U.S. and Israel for encouraging protests.

Protestors were emboldened with support internationally including from Reza Pahlavi, the son of the Shah who was overthrown in 1979. U.S. President Donald Trump stated that the U.S. is "locked and loaded and ready to go"

to support the protestors if the government harms any protestors.

The USS Abraham Lincoln carrier strike group was moved to the Middle East in a show of force against the Islamic Republic as Trump continues to express support for protestors. On Jan. 29, an Iranian defence ministry spokesperson stated that Iran would respond "forcefully" to an American attack.

Speaking to NBC News, a

protester from Isfahan recounted that security forces pulled up to a protest on motorcycles, firing indiscriminately into a crowd that had gathered. "They just started shooting people straight into their faces and bodies."

Although protests in Iran are nothing new, many sources both within and outside of Iran all agree that this one feels different. The crackdown is harsher, the amount of protests larger, and the duration has been much longer.



The Guardian

# Kurdish Forces Agree to Integrate into Syria

By DEMIR KASAPOGLU

On Jan. 30, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the military force of Democratic Autonomous Administration of

North and East Syria (DAANES, also known as Rojava), a Kurdish de-facto autonomous region in north eastern Syria, agreed to

integrate into the Syrian military.

The agreement contains multiple points including the creation of a Syrian military division made up of three brigades from the SDF and the integration of Kurdish-led civil institutions into Syria's central government.

The deal follows tense clashes between the Syrian government and SDF that led to a loss of 80% of DAANES' territory and hundreds of casualties on both sides, with allegations of war crimes by both sides as well. Although the deal is still being hammered out, this brings a period of stability to the region.

U.S. envoy Tom Barrack,

posting on X, welcomed this development as "a profound and historic milestone in Syria's journey toward national reconciliation, unity, and enduring stability." Although the SDF was a key strategic partner for the U.S., the attitude in Washington has changed. Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa has been building closer ties with the U.S., resulting in lifting of sanctions and closer cooperation.

This development comes as al-Sharaa aims to unify Syria under his control after a decade of brutal civil war.



New York Times

# Family Values in Politics, and is Cereal a Soup? Beloit College TPUSA Holds First Meeting

By ELLIOT AVE-LALLEMANT, VIVIAN KOPKA, and ELLA SILVA

After the controversy chapter at Beloit College, the sparked last semester by the proposed Turning Point USA now-approved club held its first meeting on Sunday, Jan.



Ella Silva '28

25. The meeting took place in The Stack in The Powerhouse. Around 15 people attended, with an additional four, representing the club's executive board.

After the executive board introduced themselves to the room, they began talking about what the chapter of Turning Point at Beloit College will look like. On a slideshow projected to the meeting, the club claimed that the purpose of their chapter is to "promote and uphold the principles laid out by the national organization through discussion and activities on campus."

Plans and events for the chapter consist of the following: general meetings, where different topics will be covered and discussed weekly; tabling events, to encourage club engagement; volunteer opportunities; events encouraging voter registration; programs that bring speakers on campus; and other debate-like activities.

The club's organizers also had a variety of merchandise

available for people to take, including stickers and pins with taglines saying "PROUD PATRIOT," "BIG PHARMA LOVES YOUR BAD DIET," and "MONEY ISN'T FREE." They were also handing out pocket United States Constitutions that were branded by the national Turning Point organization.

Following the discussions about the organization's purpose, the executive members engaged the audience in a game of "This or That," where participants received statements and chose a side of the room that represented their views best. The game started with light-hearted topics, such as waffles or pancakes, if cereal is or is not a soup, and whether a hot dog is a sandwich.

The questions gradually transitioned to more statements pertaining to politics, starting with the topic of hands-on or hands-off government. As the questions and statements became more divisive, complaints, raised by the meeting's attendees, argued that the phrasing of the topics were too vague.

Other discussion topics touched on issues relating to the regulation of the Second Amendment and the upholding of Church vs. State in the US government. Among the most contested "This or That" topics related to public vs. private healthcare and equity vs. equality, which sparked some of the longest conversations of the meeting.

Some of the question slides were cut for time because of the contested topics, which took up more discussion time than expected. The executive team expressed gratitude to everyone for attending and participating in the discussion as attendees left.

In an interview with *The Round Table*, one of the attendees, Demir Kasapoglu '28, was curious "to see if more people go to their events," he said. "I don't know what's gonna happen. I'm interested to see what happens next."

Upon reaching out further, executive members of the Beloit College Chapter of TPUSA declined to comment.

## January 2026 in the United States and the World

By LIO KAMMUELLER

Multiple national and international events of this past month have dramatically shifted the political landscape in the United States. In Minneapolis, two separate incidents occurred in which federal agents present in the state on an immigrant enforcement operation killed U.S. citizens. Renee Good was shot in her SUV during a verbal confrontation with an agent. Just over two weeks later, Alex Pretti was pinned down and shot while recording a video of federal officers on his phone. Videos of both incidents were posted on social media. Gov. Tim Walz and other Minnesota officials have spoken against the presence of federal agents in the Twin Cities, while officials and spokespeople from DHS have referred to both Good and Pretti as "dangerous" and "domestic terrorists". Thousands of residents of the Twin Cities have rallied in protest since these incidents occurred, including a

massive demonstration in downtown Minneapolis on Jan. 23. Trump has claimed both that he intends to "de-escalate a little bit" and that he would "not at all" pull back on his deployment of ICE in Minnesota.

Beyond the national borders, in the middle of the night on Jan. 3, the U.S. military carried out strikes in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas in order to arrest President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, on charges of narco-terrorism, drug trafficking, and possession of machine guns. With Maduro sent to New York to await trial, President Donald Trump claimed the U.S. would "run" Venezuela and negotiate deals to turn over control of the country's abundant oil resources. The intervention is controversial due to Trump's lack of congressional approval, raising concern around the intervention's legality. Delcy Rodríguez, Maduro's vice president and current

acting president of Venezuela, has called for the U.S. to "let Venezuelan politics resolve our differences and our internal conflict," but the Trump Administration is working with companies Vitol and Trafigura to sell and market Venezuelan oil. Trump has stated that the U.S. control of Venezuela could last for years

The president's attention has also turned north to Greenland, an island territory of Denmark off the coast of Nunavut, Canada. Trump has expressed interest in annexing Greenland as a territory of the U.S. Like Venezuela, Greenland possesses natural resources such as uranium and iron, and reserves of oil and natural gas are likely located around the island's coasts. Greenland's Arctic location also makes it strategically important for U.S. national security by monitoring trade and missile defense. However, the majority of Greenlanders are opposed

to joining the U.S. and prime ministers of both Greenland and Denmark reject a proposed U.S. takeover.

In a message to Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre regarding international relations with Greenland, Trump stated, "I no longer feel an obligation to think purely of Peace, although it will always be predominant, but can now think about what is good and proper for the United States of America." This sentiment raises concerns about future international conflict as a whole, particularly with regard to NATO which Denmark and the U.S. are members of. While Trump initially refused to comment on whether he would authorize the use of force to annex Greenland, he has since ruled out the prospect of military force after discussion with Mark Rutte, secretary-general of NATO.

## New Releases in the Epstein Files (and What They're Saying About Trump)

By CLAIRE WINTER

After numerous delays, retractions, and other issues, the DOJ has released a new batch of previously classified documents from the Epstein files, a massive compilation of evidence related to the criminal cases against Jeffery Epstein, infamous trafficker and child sex offender, and associates. The DOJ has missed previous deadlines to release the files, such as the Dec. 19 deadline listed in the Epstein Transparency Act, signed into law by President Trump. Previously the DOJ had released a small portion of the estimated 6 million pages of the files, most of which were already publicly available. On Jan. 30, 2026, the DOJ released an additional 3 million pages to the public.

The files mention current US president Donald J. Trump hundreds of times, along with figures like tech billionaire Elon Musk, former Prince Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor of Britain's Royal Family, and former US president Bill Clinton, among others.

Trump is listed and implicated in child sexual abuse, assault, and various other crimes within numerous parts of the released documents. The Department of Justice says that Trump's mentions in the files do not indicate any wrongdoing: "Some of the documents contain untrue and sensationalist claims against President Trump that were submitted to the FBI right before the 2020 election. To be clear, the

claims are unfounded and false, and if they have a shred of credibility, they certainly would have been weaponized against President Trump already." No accusations have been brought against Trump as of the time of writing.

While the DOJ claims that all victims' names were redacted and that the still-withheld 3 million pages are due to "protecting victims' rights" and "legal privileges," ABC News has confirmed that many victims' names were reportedly left unredacted when the files were released. The Department of Justice's site, meanwhile, remains largely unusable, with the massive amount of data to search through compounded with what seem to be

technology issues on the part of the federal government.

Trump has reportedly directed the DOJ to "be as transparent as [they] can", says Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche.



Samuel Corum/Anadolu Agency/Getty

## Keeping Warm in Beloit Below-Tens

By CLAIRE WINTER

As we cross from the excitement of the winter holiday season— Christmas, New Year's, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, etc.— into the long slog of January-to-April, you might be struggling to keep warm (and motivated). Fear not! It sucks every year but also every year we persevere. Here are a few tips and tricks for you to not freeze to death in the polar vortex.

### Layers

Layers, layers, LAYERS. LAYER SO MUCH. When I say this will be a godsend, I mean it. Wearing jeans? Put some fuzzy pajama pants on and *then* your jeans. Undershirts, second undershirts, two coats. You will look ridiculous probably but you will be so so warm, and that's the real win. Also, an obligatory mention for anyone who's been living under a rock and hasn't heard: fleece-lined tights are cute, warm, and mean you don't have to shave your legs when you go out. Wins all around.

### Heated pads/blankets

Heated blankets are expensive, but if you keep waking up freezing at 4AM, these might be a peak solution. They keep you warm, can double as hot water bottles in a pinch, and proooooobably will not set your bed and/or room on fire.

### Accessorize

Do not take one (1) coat and yourself against the

world, girl. It is cold out there. It will freezerburn the skin right off of your cheeks. I have committed this cardinal sin and it is truly not worth it. Thrift stores have a plethora of donated scarves, hats, and gloves for all of your needs. Failing that, your mom probably has an old bin somewhere. You may be clashing neon pink and puke-green, but you will be able to feel all your appendages at the end of it!

### Hot food

Or drink! We're not picky. There is a reason, though, that so many winter foods are hot and filling. Your body is burning a lot of calories to keep you warm-give it a little assistance. Also I know you probably have spare hot chocolate somewhere. Boil some water (not in the microwave you cretins). Tea, coffee, reheated energy drink, whatever!

### Walk around

It may seem counterproductive, but one of the best ways to keep warm (indoors and out) is to *not stand there in the cold*. Cold, atomically, is just atoms slowing down moving around and bumping each other. The hypothetically coldest temperature our universe will ever experience or reach is the proverbial heat death, after every star dies and the background radiation from the Big Bang sighs and fizzles its way out. Nothing will move. All will be still. Did this bit of

existential terror motivate you to start moving? Start moving.

Despite the winter months still ahead of us, this advice may be late for those of you who suffered through subzero temps this past week- the forecasts for the coming week mostly displays Beloit temperatures staying at a balmy high twenties to low thirties, and only small amounts of snow predicted. Still, we can never be too sure in Wisconsin- so keep warm out there!



Claire Winter '28

# Providing the Essentials: Volunteering at Caritas

By COOPER RATHMANN

When an undergraduate student arrives on campus for the first time, it is uncommon for them to consider places to volunteer. In most cases, the location of a college or university contributes to the decision made by the student and their family. These prospective students might look into the population size or the downtown area, yet the people who have long called the city home are typically not factored in.

I had the same mindset when choosing Beloit College as well. I came into my first year unaware of affairs occurring outside of the college's influence. It took me until this semester to realize there is a relative disconnect with the students and the city of Beloit. My freshman year schedule ate away at my time and mental health, causing me to pass up on volunteering opportunities off campus. However, that all changed last semester after I signed up for Professor Jingjing Lou's Ecology, Education, and Development seminar.

The class called for students to register a minimum of 20 service hours in addition to a final project with a self-selected organization in the greater Beloit area. Luckily for me, my fraternity brother Ashton Adams<sup>27</sup> presented me with a great opportunity to explore the city and make a lasting impact for the city. Although completing the adequate service



Via Caritas

hours is what prompted my volunteering participation, I am very happy it came before I deemed my schedule "too busy."

That is when I started volunteering my time at Caritas during the fall. Caritas is a community resource center that provides services including a food pantry, diaper bank, community garden, and a birthday bags program. The organization has been a staple of the community since the 1970s. A collective of pastors including Reverend Ian Stirrat came together and established Caritas to address food scarcity. That legacy has been carried on to the present, continuously growing to the organization it is today at 2840 Prairie Ave.

What solidifies Caritas' longevity is because its work

has persisted generations. Executive director Larisa Chmielewski is the daughter of Reverend Stirrat, and she carries on the foundational work of her father. She has been advocating the mission that "everyone who walks through the door gets fed and has access to all other provided products."

I logged a total of 12 hours over the two months doing a multitude of tasks that are a part of the well-oiled machine that Caritas is. The first two times I assisted in the food pantry, where people would come in for groceries depending on family size.

During these sessions, I was also able to utilize my Spanish skills. It came up the most in the pantry and the pickup grocery option communicating with those community members who do

not use English as their first language. Although I may not be bilingual, I was able to properly communicate the services Caritas offered and make sure all families went home with the appropriate necessities.

For the other times I volunteered, the work was more behind the scenes but still made a lasting impact. It would usually be a mixture of stocking the grocery carts for pickups or sorting through donated items. These tasks allowed for more food to get distributed in the pantry and kept the day-to-day flow consistent and steady.

Many people probably wonder where all the food for Caritas is coming from. A lot of logistics go into receiving the larger quantities of food, especially when outside organizations get

involved. For instance, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a large provider for Caritas, bringing anywhere from 7,500 to 16,000 pounds of food per monthly delivery. The federal program is not paid for on behalf of Caritas, yet they do not decide what is brought in for each delivery.

Caritas also works closely with Second Harvest, an organization in Madison, to order and receive certain amounts of food. Chmielewski always tries to find ways to have access to milk and eggs, yet some of the other products can be ordered for free, bringing in more of an abundance for the pantry. Second Harvest also partners with grocery stores like Sam's Club or Walmart, but items that come from that system function on a "taking it all principle,"

which essentially means Caritas brings in items the specific store offers to them.

Outside of these two organizations, Chmielewski said the donations from the greater Beloit area are typically from local churches, food drives, and spontaneous donors. As of October of this year, the community has brought Caritas an estimated 480,000 pounds of food. What is outstanding about these donations is the value of price per pound, which is \$1.97. The price per pound is just one of the examples Caritas can show to affirm their strong relationship with its donors and organizations looking to help feed the hungry.

I had a lot to take away from my volunteering experience and I am happy to say I will definitely be returning in 2026. All volunteers come from different walks of life, to which they foster a safe and welcoming environment for all who participate. Chmielewski said the best part of the work is "what it gives you in return. It's a way to feel fulfilled and find purpose beyond self interests," to which I could not agree more.

College students across the world should find ways to get involved within their institution's city. The community has a lot to offer back, and it all starts with giving a little bit of your time.

# TikTok Is Under New Ownership! You Should Care!

By KEEGAN DEWITT

On Jan. 22, TikTok users would wake up to an unfamiliar message plastered on their screens once opening the app: "Updates to our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy." There was no way to bypass it, and users needed to accept the changes to continue using the app. Of course, this caused some alarm within the community, especially learning on a surface level what changed. While this has supposedly been a long time coming since the attempted TikTok ban in early 2025, it still raises some questions as to what really happened.

In short, TikTok officially switched its ownership over from ByteDance, an internet technology company based in China, to TikTok USDS Joint Venture LLC. USDS JV is a newly formed joint company with multiple investors who now share an "Americanized" version of the app with ByteDance. Some of the notable investors are Oracle, Silver Lake, and MGX, all of whom own the largest portion of all the other companies inside this deal. This was all to be in compliance with the Executive Order that originally kept TikTok from being banned in the United States. According to TikTok's announcement of the new deal, this new ownership promises users better data security and user safety.

At first, this transfer in ownership may not seem too out of the ordinary. However, updated ownership inevitably means updated terms of service as well. This is where most of the user concern stems from. Even before the switch of ownership, users have complained about

content censorship and shadowbanning certain topics from appearing on the For You page. More often than not, this specifically targets political content centered around topics such as national protests and anti-ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) content. While you may get the content you previously looked for, it is noticeably appearing less and less.

AJ Nowak<sup>24</sup>, a frequent user of the app, has seen this change for themselves. "The first day, there was more news station-based content, but I flipped past it, and it doesn't show me much anymore. My algorithm had a lot of queer, disabled, and somewhat politically active people already in it, and I am still seeing them, but [it's] definitely less and mostly [content] I seek out." They continued, "I'm specifically talking about the For You' page here. I've noticed that the like-to-view count on a lot of the content is dramatically lower than normal, and I have seen a few creators mention that their stuff isn't getting pushed to the For You page anymore."

There is also additional worry over whether a user actually owns their content once posted on the app. Users raise concern that with the new terms of service, users no longer "own" their videos, which instead belong to TikTok. This is not entirely true; you still have ownership of whatever content you post; however, there are a few small details that make it confusing. If you post anything with "original" content, such as music, TikTok has the ability to take that and use it for advertisement on the app and its own AI training.

TikTok has made it clear in its terms of service about new provisions for the use of not only generative AI on the platform, but also within the app itself. There are larger regulations for content creators who solely use AI to create their videos, most of which require a specific label on their videos to show this. Even with larger restrictions, this does not stop the app itself from using generative AI to regulate things such as the algorithm. These new terms state exactly what the AI is used for, creating

transparency between the user and the owners.

Now, the privacy policy is where most users are considering cutting ties with the app. As most people may know, the privacy policy is meant to outline what data TikTok collects from you, and what data is protected from being used in the app. With old privacy policies, TikTok was able to gather data on personal aspects of your life, including (but not limited to) citizenship and immigration status, gender and sexual orientation, and mental health diagnoses. The new policy changes what they do with that data now, which they state that they will process in accordance with any applicable laws. In addition, it also allows for a more accurate GPS location from any device connected to the app. This gives TikTok a larger grasp on your data and allows it to do much more with it. Users have the ability to turn this function off, though, by taking steps such as stopping the syncing of their contacts.

There is another way that users are stopping TikTok

from gathering their data: simply deleting the app. More than ever, people are moving to platforms like Instagram and RedNote to show their displeasure with these new policies. That is not the case with everyone, though. Rowan Wilson<sup>27</sup> shares that "the only reason I hesitate to delete [TikTok] is because it's the only place I can use to make lip-syncing cosplay videos, the original purpose of the app when it was created 10 years ago, and I don't want to lose the ability to do it because that's very fun for me. I don't do these often, maybe twice a year, but I don't want to lose the option and [I] haven't found anything that sucks less to use." Like Wilson, many people struggle to delete TikTok because of its unique capabilities and communities. Unlike Instagram, there are so many niches to find that you feel at home anywhere on the app. "I might be convinced to delete it anyway, though," says Wilson, "I just don't want to lose an outlet for a creative hobby I have."

So, should you delete TikTok? Ultimately, it is up to you whether this is your last straw with the app. Some do not want to take the risk, especially with the alleged problems Oracle has been posing on the app, while others decide just to take extra precautions. In the end, though, it is always a good idea to stay educated on what any social media app does, especially with your personal data, and the updated policies it may make in the future. It is also important to do your own research and work past those who attempt to fearmonger you into making a certain decision.



Keegan Dewitt

# Emotionally Destroyed by an Old Man: A Theo of Golden Review

By VANESSA SKILDUM

Simply put, when I picked up “Theo of Golden” by Allen Levi, I expected a light cozy mystery, a feel-good book, something to casually pick up and read a chapter here or there.

Instead, my heart shattered into thousands of pieces. By page 43, I had tears in my eyes. I met characters who will stay with me for a long time. Towards the end, I grew so mad I almost threw the book (don't worry, it stayed in my hands).

The prologue states that Theo spent just one year in Golden: “Only a year. Not so long. But long enough to create a current of his own and to catch others in it. Without knowing it, a whole cadre — Asther, Tony, Ellen, Basil, dozens of others — was being carried along by the vortex that was Theo.” I, too, was swept up in the current and will never be the same.

The story follows Theo, an 86-year-old from Portugal who settles in the small town of Golden, Georgia. In Golden, he visits a coffee shop displaying 92 pencil portraits by a local artist. Inspired, Theo buys the portraits and begins to give them to their “rightful owners.”

He does so quietly, not wanting to draw attention to himself, and slowly but surely along with him, we are introduced to the citizens of Golden, and at the same time, Theo himself. He is quite a mystery to the town and to the reader alike, and throughout the pages, you are trying to guess what brought him to Golden and his intentions.

Normally, I only annotate books for academic purposes. I like to let myself get lost in the story without analyzing literary themes or subplots. That went straight out the window after I began reading. Levi's elegant prose moved me

seamlessly from one chapter to the next, all while my pencil moved of its own accord, underlining words and phrases, leaving theories, or even just reactions.

“Theo of Golden” falls under literary fiction, focusing on characters, themes, and stylistic writing rather than fast-paced plots. The characters in this book are what really sold me. They were expertly written, so that I felt like I intimately knew them even if they only appeared for a total of three pages. I cared about every single member of the main cast, which is rare for me (I tend to pick favorites).

The book has great one-liners that had me laughing, whether from Theo's thoughts, actions, or Tony's running jokes. Other lines made my eyes water, or caused me to pause and think.

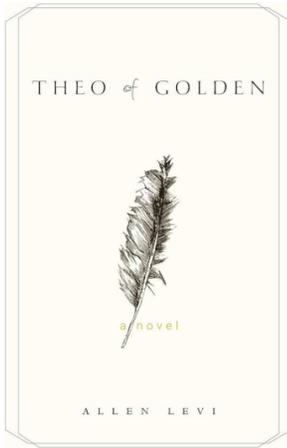
Books like this make me hesitant: I worry they'll get too

preachy about positivity. “Theo of Golden” walks the line where Theo just says what he sees and thinks, like how your best friend would talk to you. Very straightforward, and very, VERY little sugarcoating.

My biggest, and only, caveat with the book is how the plot is explained with letters at the end. I usually find that authors use this device as a scapegoat to cover up their work when they haven't properly threaded plot lines throughout and need to magically tie them into a quick, pretty little bow at the end.

Somehow, somehow, I didn't really mind the way Allen included the use of letters. He introduces the idea of letters earlier in the book, and he also weaves so many threads together to form an entire tapestry, where the letter at the end is almost like his final signature of the piece, rather than the thing that holds the entire story together.

I liked “Theo of Golden” as soon as I started reading, but it was the elegant prose, the character interactions, and the ending that left me a sobbing mess, which solidified its place as one of my favorite books I have ever read.



“Theo of Golden” cover, Amazon

# “Iron Lung” - Eat Your Heart Out, Lovecraft

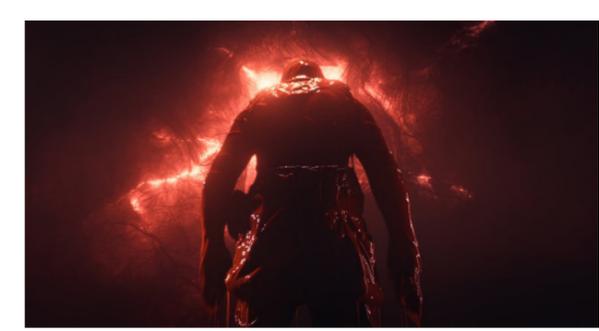
By CLAIRE WINTER

If you were under the age of thirty and even vaguely online anywhere from 2014 onwards, you know about Markiplier. And if you've been online and even vaguely aware of anything about Markiplier, you've probably already heard about “Iron Lung”.

“Iron Lung”- directed by, starring, and bankrolled by Mark Fischbach- aka Markiplier- is a movie adaptation of David Szymanski's game of the same name, in which you play as an unnamed protagonist welded inside a rudimentary submarine (the proverbial iron lung) and plunged into an ocean of blood on an alien planet. Hyped by Markiplier and well-known to his fanbase, but with a relatively small advertising budget otherwise, the movie had its in-theater release January 30th.

Unlike other movies airing, “Iron Lung” doesn't have a studio distributing or coordinating its release, making it an indie film working on a truly massive scale. (4,161 theaters and counting across the world are showing “Iron Lung”.)

“Iron Lung” is fundamentally a cosmic horror film, and oh boy does it deliver. Slow descents into madness, incomprehensible and alien terrors, and the fine line between reality and hallucination- “Iron Lung” has all of these in spades. As a slow-build horror film, the concepts are unique and genuinely compelling. Meanwhile, its underwater aesthetics and



“Iron Lung” Trailer, Youtube

terror of a blood ocean (like a normal ocean, but twice as bad!) only compound this. Eat your heart out, Lovecraft— “Iron Lung” is coming for the terror of deep waters and the eldritch in their depths.

However, where many viewers and critics are tripping up is on “Iron Lung”'s technical execution, rather than its basic premises.

To carry the entirety of a two-hour movie on their shoulders is a lot to ask of any actor. To carry the entirety of a two-hour movie, shot in one incredibly small space with practically no other actors ever onscreen is a high-impossible task to ask of one. Fischbach makes a solid effort, but it's hard to say how well it lands. (I'll leave that to someone who didn't spend their youth watching five-hour livestreams of the guy.)

My real issue is instead with the script: instead of talking, much of the acting involved here is simply pacing around while looking

bedraggled and horrified, cut with desperate shots of frantic eyes. For a movie with such killer, bleak worldbuilding, “Iron Lung” doesn't allow the audience much glimpse into it. The most we get is an opening monologue and oblique references to warring factions that leave a first-time viewer confused rather than intrigued. The monologue isn't original to the movie, either- the same one plays at the beginning of the “Iron Lung” game. It's a nice callback, but I expected more.

On another note, the cinematography and design is remarkable. If an audience is going to spend two hours staring at the inside of a metal room, the metal room had better look good, or at least acceptably atmospheric- and this is where “Iron Lung” shines. The game submarine is polygonal and clunky. The movie submarine looks like a place *you die in*. Every shot is gritty, metallic, and claustrophobic enough to drive

to a friend, only to hear them call it “basically just a series of creepy hallways.” “Iron Lung” doesn't follow a stereotypical pattern of in-your-face action scenes- the entire thing is a slow, exponential build of tension, with elements building on each other as the circumstances just continue to get worse and worse. When you watch a movie, you engage with it on its terms. “Iron Lung”'s terms are simply that you have to *wait* for the real crazy shit. Sorry. L. Skill issue, even.

Despite negative critic reviews (which I am disinclined to trust, considering “Emilia Perez”'s 71% on Rotten Tomatoes, which is a lie so massive they probably got tips from the Trump administration), “Iron Lung” is clearly beloved by fans. The movie was number one in the US for two days following its release, temporarily topping Sam Raimi's “Send Help”, and has grossed \$18 million thus far. Word from Fischbach in a recent stream indicates that the director is working to release it on an even bigger scale.

While “Iron Lung” is far from perfect, it's neither a “fail” nor a “slog”. It's an indie film doing things that we haven't seen in the film industry thus far, and what it does well, it does *exceptionally* well at. I look forward to seeing what kind of indie films and opportunities “Iron Lung” might open up...just like an eldritch monster slowly peeling open a submarine's hull.

A complaint I do not agree with, however, is critics' complaints that the movie is “slow” and “a drag” to watch.

This may be just personal taste. Extreme slow-burn horror, rather than in-your-face action, has always been my preference. I'll never forget showing one of my all-time favorite horror movies, “Skinamarink”- which I literally covered my eyes at the ending of

the point home. And despite my issues with the script, “Iron Lung” is achingly physical; a contrast to the ever-rising prevalence of CGI over practical effects. There's no items that magically disappear and never have to be thought of again by the audience. Every piece of tape is precious. Every flicker of light is dearly paid for. The special effects (by which I mean the 80,000+ gallons of fake blood) are insane, cool, and gory as hell.

Okay, actually, I have to pause just to say: holy fuck, the amount of blood in this movie is insane. The trailers were absolutely dripping and this movie delivers. Evil Dead (2013)'s previous record (an estimated 50,000-70,000 gallons of fake blood) is GONE.

The sound design reviews are mixed. A genuinely excellent soundtrack composed by Andrew Hulshult is one of “Iron Lung”'s best features, but many viewers are complaining that the actual dialogue is poorly mixed- a complaint I unfortunately have to agree with. The entire movie made me wish for subtitles.

A complaint I do not agree with, however, is critics' complaints that the movie is “slow” and “a drag” to watch.

This may be just personal taste. Extreme slow-burn horror, rather than in-your-face action, has always been my preference. I'll never forget showing one of my all-time favorite horror movies, “Skinamarink”- which I literally covered my eyes at the ending of

# Stranger Things's Legendary Run Turned Legendary Fail

By KEIRA LINTON

“Stranger Things” has been a huge part of my personality since it came out in 2016. My parents actually had to ban the series' title from being uttered in our house for a while back in 2022, after the release of Season 4 awoke the annoying nerd demon inside of me. Needless to say, I am a huge fan of the show. I have been anxiously anticipating the final season for three years, diving deep into all the conspiracies and searching for every easter egg. Then, finally, the day came for the story to finish.

“Stranger Things” is Netflix's baby, making Netflix over \$1 billion in streaming revenue alone. You can't find anyone that hasn't seen at least some of “Stranger Things” by now. Netflix has successfully turned this fun, nerdy, '80s sci-fi show into its largest grossing cash cow for the last 10 years — and yet it still released the final season in *three* volumes. The length between Volume 1 and Volume 2 was a month, ensuring watchers wouldn't be cancelling their subscriptions any time soon. Seriously, do you need any more money?

Maybe it was the excitement from my inner child or the nostalgia of seeing all the characters again, but overall



“Stranger Things” screencap, Netflix

I thought Volume 1 was solid. Obviously everyone's main complaint is that the child actors are now grown adults but honestly, you just have to look past that if you want to find any sort of joy in the show. Volume 1 is silly but still has good action. Hopper and Eleven are in the Upside Down, Max is still alive, and the whole gang is going to defeat Vecna. Oh, and how could I forget the Walk Em Down Wheelers? Karen can use her wine glass on me any day. The final episode of Volume 1 was rather promising for the rest of the season. We see Kali (Eleven's sister from Season 2) be reincorporated back into the plot, finally adding meaning to her one episode feature, and we get WILL THE WISE IN REAL LIFE! I don't care who you are, that scene was badass. Sadly, that is about where my praises end.

Volume 2 was underwhelming, to say the

least. It starts off strong with a plot to connect Will back to the hive mind and save Derek, but this ends up just being a massive plot hole. They never follow up on the family they drugged, kidnapped, and left in a barn. We get some cool action with Steve driving his car with Dustin, Jonathan, and Nancy into the Upside Down. Then we have Nancy shooting that exotic matter and trapping her and Jonathan in a cum room. Like what the hell is all that slime and why does it need to look like that? This scene also pissed me off; they should have died. The Duffer Brothers swore there would be deaths and tears, and I was fully ready for this one. So much more meaning and depth would have been added to that “un-marriage” if they died instead of just breaking up. I gotta say though, I am happy Nancy is finally freed from those trauma bonded shackles. I'm not a Jancy hater by any means, but I love Nancy and that girl needs to be alone.

I was overall fed up with all the plot armor...

**Read more on the Round Table website.**

# A Chicago Homecoming: Tortoise at the Auditorium Theater

By ETHAN COOPER

Although many have never heard their name before, Tortoise is a band that has proven to be one of the most influential groups among the nebulous post-rock genre. The band was formed by bassist Douglas McCombs and drummer John Herndon in late 1980s Chicago. They would soon be joined by John McEntire and Bundy K. Brown, drummer and bassist respectively, as well as percussionist Dan Bitney. Notably, David Pajo, a member of the hugely influential Slint, recorded two albums together with Tortoise. While Brown is no longer a member of Tortoise, the former four have been making music together since the early nineties, their most recent release made available on Sept, 9, 2025 and titled “Touch.”

Despite being dumped into the inscrutable mix of post-rock, the music of Tortoise eludes categorization. Their breakout album, “Millions Now Living Will Never Die,” swings back and forth between jazz-fusion, progressive rock, chamber rock, and electronic ambient. Their subsequent album, “TNT,” demonstrates this same inventiveness, including elements of dub, jazz, rock, and minimalism.

Occasioned by the release of “Touch,” Tortoise announced a sprawling tour, taking them from San Francisco to Sydney. They kicked off their tour in their hometown of Chicago, Illinois, playing their new album “Touch” live for the first time ever. They played the storied



The Auditorium Theatre, Wikipedia

Auditorium theater, joined by the Chicago Philharmonic, for a rare audio-visual feast.

Located at 50 East Ida B. Wells Drive, the inside of the Auditorium itself was worth the price of admission. Completed in 1889, the theater is known for its neo-romanesque architecture, unparalleled acoustics, and hosting a litany of the biggest acts of all time, including Ray Charles, The Beach Boys, Diana Ross, James Brown, David Bowie, and Elton John to name just a few.

From my seat three rows from the stage, it felt as if no one could truly honor the acoustic capabilities of the theater better than Chicago Philharmonic, hailed as among the finest orchestras in the nation. Sweeping orchestral refrains were supported by the skilled musicians of Tortoise. Despite the vast differences in style and medium, the two musical bodies wove together beautifully, sustaining a reverent atmosphere....

**Read more on the Round Table website**

# Women's Basketball Falls to Grinnell

By KIMBERLY PILON

Last Tuesday night, Beloit College women's basketball was set up against Grinnell College in their second game of the season.

The Buccaneers started off strong, holding the lead for most of the first quarter, with significant offensive efforts made by Julia Kennedy '28, who contributed a third of Beloit's points in the first quarter. Grinnell managed to gain a lead in the last few minutes, giving themselves a six point lead (22-16) heading into the second quarter.

The Bucs became stagnant offensively in the second, but major defensive contributions

by Hailey Johnson '26 and Kaitlyn Davis '27 helped the Bucs continue their fight. In the third quarter, Sophia Corley '29 and Kennedy's points pushed the Bucs offensively, with Corley making multiple layups and Kennedy with multiple threes. However, the Buccaneers still headed into their final quarter with a score 30-49.

Throughout the fourth quarter, many players stepped up offensively and defensively, with Davis scoring a few points of her own, as well as Brooke Foster '29. Johnson also continued on both ends of the court, earning 3 blocks

and Bailey Darneal '27 added a few points as well, ending the game with 10 points.

Kennedy finished the game with 5 completed 3's, and tied her career high with 19 points. Johnson and Davis both ended with 10 rebounds, and 9 points came from the bench.

Next, Beloit women's basketball takes the court on Wednesday, Feb. 4, at 7:30 p.m., immediately following the men's basketball game. Their last home game and senior night is Wednesday, Feb. 18. Show up and support their seniors during their last game at home.



Kayla Wolff

# Super Bowl LX Preview

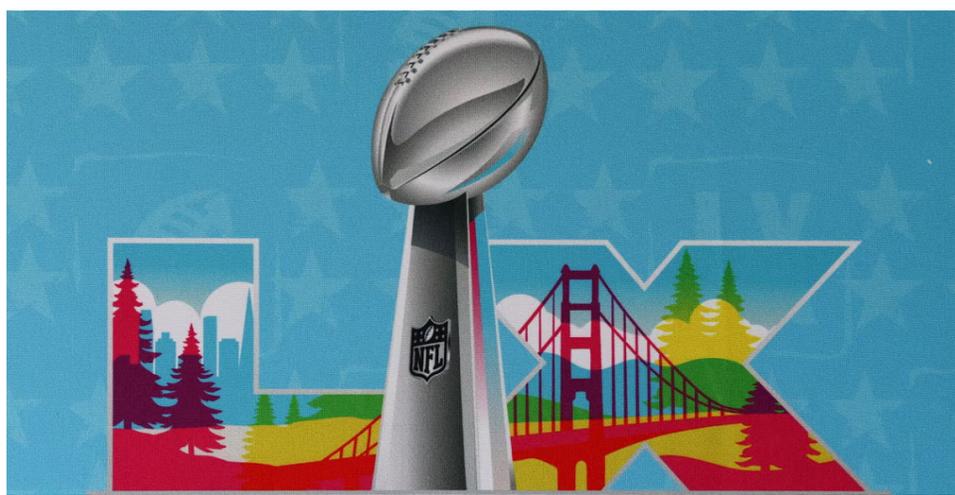
By CIAN McKEOWN

On Feb. 8, 2026, toe will meet ball at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, for the most important game in American sports, the Super Bowl. Super Bowl LX will see the clash of two teams that are new to the biggest stage in their current incarnations, the six-time champion New England Patriots and the Super Bowl XLVIII champion Seattle Seahawks. The game will be broadcast on NBC beginning at 5:30 p.m. CST, and will feature Puerto Rican music superstar Bad Bunny as its halftime performer.

Both teams are headlined by elite defenses and quarterbacks who were selected third overall in the NFL Draft (Patriot Drake Maye in 2024, and Seahawk Sam Darnold in 2018), and come into the game aiming to prove doubters in the media wrong who wore their bias on their sleeves when underestimating both squads during the regular and postseason.

Many doubted the strength of the Patriots' 14-3 regular-season record, citing their playing a last-place schedule in 2025 and therefore facing weaker competition. The fact remains, however, that the Patriots still got the job done in dominant fashion, cementing second-year quarterback Drake Maye as an MVP Finalist and finishing with a top-ten scoring defense.

Even when the team cruised into the postseason as the number two seed, NFL media members and fans alike



seemed unconvinced upon their run to the Super Bowl. Many cited poor quarterback play by each of the team's three opponents (Justin Herbert, CJ Stroud, and Jarrett Stidham all had dreadful days) and asserted that New England's appearance in the big game may have been accomplished too easily.

What critics conveniently forgot to mention was that the Patriots faced three of the NFL's top five overall defenses in the Chargers, Texans, and Broncos, and emerged with a win each time. However, after an AFC Championship game that saw the Patriots put up a mere ten points on offense in a win, Drake Maye will have to prove that he can have a big game in the playoffs without having to rely on his stout defense and Orthruss-

esque running back tandem featuring standout rookie home run threat TreVeyon Henderson and bruiser Rhamondre Stevenson.

The Seahawks also flew under the radar more than an elite team would in the regular season, being passed up for discussion in deference to significantly diminished and overwrought major market NFC powerhouses like the Los Angeles Rams and defending champion Philadelphia Eagles.

Although they were shaded by towering, lush pines and the glimmer of the Puget Sound, Seattle's "small market team" (the Seattle metro area has a population of 4.15 million) thundered into the playoffs as the number one seed after beating out their hobbled division rival, the 49ers, in the final week of the season.

*Esquire*

After another drubbing of the 49ers in the divisional round, the Seahawks advanced to the NFC Championship Game at home to face a familiar foe in the Los Angeles Rams, meeting the team again after the two clashed in an instant classic on Thursday Night Football in the regular season. Seattle outclassed the Rams in another thriller, leading them to their first Super Bowl appearance in 11 years and leading presumptive MVP Matthew Stafford to ponder a career as a Cialis pitchman.

It will be a long offseason for Stafford, lying in that strange van always parked outside the Rams' practice facility, desperately trying to repair his ninety-five-year-old back. Seattle is also highlighted by one of the league's top defenses, a menacing unit

nicknamed the "Dark Side."

The keys to the game will be on defense, as the Patriots must put pressure on the Seahawks' precision passer, Sam Darnold, and force one of the slow starts on offense that often plagued the team in the regular season. However, Seattle does possess a running back looking to take souls on the ground in the form of Kenneth Walker III.

If the Seahawks can protect Darnold and find a way around Christian Barmore and the rest of the Patriots' intimidating defense line, they'll be all set to take home the Lombardi, coming into the game as four and a half point favorites.

Seattle also needs to prevent any possible heroics by Drake Maye, and the Patriots must ensure they fail in doing so. Maye will need a career-defining performance, such as the one Tom Brady had in his first Super Bowl as a heavy underdog versus another NFC West juggernaut in the St. Louis Rams, to defeat such a vaunted Seattle squad.

If New England can make it a slugfest and win ugly, all the better, as their defense will need to stay on their toes, and their offensive line will need to provide running lanes for Henderson and Stevenson. The stage is set for another memorable Super Bowl, the culmination of one of the most unexpected and dynamic NFL seasons in recent history.

# Paddy's Misery, Volkanovski's Win: UFC 324 and 32 Recap

By JEFFREY BATTLE

In many ways, the night always has some stars that shine brighter than others. These past two weekends, we have seen both at UFC 324 and 32. Alexander Volkanovski has once again proved why he isn't just a champion, but an all-time GOAT. He has created a new standard for any type of mixed martial arts mastery that you may see. At UFC 325 in Sydney, THE featherweight king faced Diego Lopes in their second battle to secure the belt.

Alexand Volkanovski's win was not about sudden moments or really swings. Most people who watch UFC know that it was all about pure control.

Volk's packing and discipline established the play style early on in this fight. He kept establishing his range by using constant lateral movement, stance switching, and angles to deny Lopes a stationary target. Lopes looked to close the distance aggressively, throwing looping shots and kicks to force exchanges, but Volk rarely stood in front of him long enough for combos to develop. Counters and jabs were really what controlled Lopes early on.

As rounds wore on, Volk finally began to focus on the "mixed" part of mixed martial arts. He mixed in body shots and head strikes, feints, and

countered Lopes even more cleanly. A lot of the last round was really about his domination on top (pause), controlling the ground game that Volk is notoriously good at.

Lopes did have his moments. Especially when he finally got him trapped against the cage, but he struggled to keep him there. Lopes' offense came in large bursts, while Volkanovski won exchanges across all rounds. Volk is the champion for a reason, as his defense was just as important as that offense above. Lots of quick exits and a strong balance prevented capitalization on Lopes' offense.

By the final rounds, Volk continued to just bank in damage and not expose himself to any risks. Lopes' pressure kept up, but efficiency plummeted as a result. Finally, we got to see Volk STILL be the champion once again.

Paddy Pimblett's fight against Bobby Green was decided quickly, but it followed a clear pattern from the opening exchanges. Green started the bout doing what he does best, staying light on his feet, hands low, looking to draw reactions and counter in space. Pimblett, meanwhile, took a more measured

approach than in some of his earlier UFC appearances, keeping his guard higher and prioritizing position over volume.

The striking exchanges were brief and cautious. Green tried to bait Pimblett into long-range exchanges, but Pimblett avoided prolonged pocket fighting and instead focused on closing distance behind straight punches. As soon as the fight moved into clinch range, the momentum shifted.

Pimblett secured the takedown and immediately advanced position, showing urgency rather than allowing Green time to scramble. Once on the ground, Pimblett passed into a dominant top position and began isolating Green's posture. Green attempted to create space with frames and hip movement, but Pimblett stayed tight, controlling the hips and limiting escapes.

The finish came when Pimblett transitioned smoothly into a triangle choke setup. Rather than forcing it, he adjusted his angle, cut off Green's ability to posture up, and tightened the squeeze. Green resisted briefly, but the position was locked in cleanly, leaving little room to survive. The tap came quickly.

## Athletes of the Week

**Josh Yearby '27**  
Track and Field



**Kaitlin Davis '27**  
Women's Basketball



BBC

# Project 2025 in 2026

By ELISA TURNER

In November of 2024, a co-writer and I wrote an over four-thousand word article about Project 2025. Contrary to popular belief, this was not because we wanted to make our copy editor suffer. We had two primary reasons—first, Donald Trump had just won the election, which polarized folks across campus. People we knew and loved feared for their rights, and the looming threat of Project 2025 was a large propagator in this. This brings us to the second reason—because existing articles were vague. Nobody directly pulled quotes from the document itself. Nobody outlined a direct, tangible, streamlined ideology or goals of Project 2025. It told you to be scared, but not exactly what for. “It could lead to” this and “it may suggest” that, but nothing direct.

We had a goal in mind when writing this: we aimed to read the entirety of the 900-page document, pull direct quotes just like your English teacher taught you, and try to outline direct, plainly-stated threats from the project.

The problem with this was the document itself. Nine hundred pages from the Conservative Mandate For Leadership, and it was just as namby-pamby as the articles that wrote about it. No wonder other sources had to be vague—the document itself beats around the bush so hard it could win a carnival prize. It speaks in maybes and acronyms, one must solve the authors’ riddles three before finishing a subject, and their financial plan is an outrageous demand, and it’s too many damn pages for any man to understand.

If you haven’t read the article, our central claim was the following: Project 2025 wants to make life harder for women, single mothers, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ people, purveyors and beneficiaries of renewable energy, and low-income people. Read the article ([roundtable.beloit.edu](http://roundtable.beloit.edu)) if you want specifics.

That being said, Trump’s been in office for roughly a year now. In a debate with Kamala Harris, he claimed no affiliation with Project 2025. Despite this, the project is 40% complete and 22% in progress within his first year in office. The Project 2025 Tracker ([project2025](http://project2025).

observer) is a site that has tracked an itemized list of goals laid out by Project 2025. It itemizes progress by agency, and tags them by issue. Ignoring the somewhat rampant ads, it’s a well-run site with an aim for objectivity.



Betty Cavicchia '28

The goals related to The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are the most progressed upon, having listed and completed six objectives, including but not limited to removing all Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts from USAID, prioritizing Christian faith-based funding, prohibiting funding to reproductive health programs, and cancelling over 130 clean-energy related contracts, and eventually shutting down USAID.

White House goals are at 92% completion with 13 total goals. Four of these goals are environmental in nature, all are completed;

the Office of Domestic Climate Policy has been abolished, Council of Environmental Quality’s (CEQ) authority has been rescinded, the Working Group on the Social Cost of Carbon has been eliminated, 400 scientist authors of the Nat’l Climate Assessment have been fired, and the US Global Change Research Program website has been taken down. In relation to LGBTQIA+ policies and DEI, the Gender Policy Council was eliminated, the Department of Health and Human Services terminated over 80 DEI contracts, and the Department of Education cut support to disabled students and low-income schools.

Environmental protections have been lessened in various governmental departments. Trump rescinded funding for marine protections. The Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management was eliminated to increase fossil fuel use, and Biden’s order to protect 30% of US Land and water by 2030.

I could truly go on and on about the rancidity that this administration has already gotten away with. The lessened environmental protections alone upset me to my very core, and in the pit of my stomach, I wonder how I am supposed to be a generative adult after my education if this is the world I am to walk into.

With that in mind, the most heinous of it all lies within what has yet to be completed. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Cutting funding to states that do not provide detailed abortion reports
- Requiring all federally funded schools to give students the military entrance test
- Phasing out Title I programs
- Elimination of the Head Start program
- Allow employers to make discriminatory decisions based on religion
- Rescind medical coverage for gender affirmation transition operations
- Eliminating union-busting preventions
- “classify educators and public librarians” who discuss “transgender ideology” with minors as “sex offenders.”

- Weaken regulations on baby formula
- And much, much more.

The organization of the Project 2025 tracker site is, admittedly, much better than the organization of our previous article, and for more details to make your blood pressure skyrocket I would highly recommend checking it out.

The governing bodies in play are halfway through this plan and one year into Trump’s presidency, and the skew in this is no accident. If you navigate to the “charts” tab of the tracker site, you’ll see an upward trend. Purveyors of these policies know that rattling off these items off the cuff would make readers flinch in their seats. This is why they sugarcoat—each proposition is wrapped in spindles of maybes, writers ramble on about possible methods, cite X (formerly Twitter) and the Federalist Papers, on and on until it’s impossible to decipher the original point. Underhanded methods and language like this is one of the reasons so many republicans admitted to not reading the One Big Beautiful Bill before voting for it ([lieu.house.gov](http://lieu.house.gov)).

If I were to formulate a prediction, it would be the following: progress will plateau for some time. The most gut-wrenching of these policies will be passed quietly, while a distraction floats about—Trump audibly shits himself in an interview again, or says something heinous in a fit of hate or demented confusion. Policies will pass before we have a chance to be pissed about it, or call our representatives to exercise what little remains of our democratic powers.

It is easy to be hopeless, but I am choosing to exercise what little remains anyways. On the Project 2025 tracker site, there is a little red axe icon on some in-progress and completed items. This represents interference in the passing of these policies— a symbol that the checks and balances system our government proclaims is actually working, at least a little bit. I hold out hope that the low-rendered little red axe icon will be propagated across every other policy on the site.

## Everyone Looks Queer Now

By LYDIA WILLIAMS

Picture this: I spot a cute girl with a shaggy wolf cut and a pink carabiner clipped on her jeans and docs across the cafe. I tell her I love her hair and ask for her number. Then I hear the dreaded phrase: “I’m flattered but I’m not into girls.” I’m left with my hope crushed and my gaydar confused. Why is it that fashion styles and accessories that were once hallmarks of the LGBTQ+ community are being adopted by cisgender and straight people?

Within recent months, queer influencers on social media have begun observing that queer aesthetics are becoming more popular with those outside of the community. TikTok user @notolsenchris called out to fellow gay people in larger cities, “We need to all get together and recalibrate our gaydars, because gays are looking straight and straights are looking gay. It’s getting hard to tell.”

Like many other subcultures, an important part of the LGBTQ+ community is the fashion. Fashion has been used to subvert conventions of gender and respectability within the community for decades. For example, lesbian butches of the 1940s and 50s dressed traditionally masculine to protest the “three-article rule,” an anti-cross-dressing law stating that women must wear at least three pieces of traditionally feminine clothing ([history.com](http://history.com)).

With the modern loosening of gender expression expectations and the decriminalization of cross-dressing, it is safer, more socially acceptable, and more accessible to push against tradition with clothing. It is no longer as intensely dangerous to wear clothing that challenges one’s perceived gender and thus has become less of a personal statement to do so.

Social media also plays a role in the popularization of LGBTQ+ fashion. Social media allows for all groups of



Lydia Williams

people to share their lives and style in a quick and easy manner. Users are exposed to cultures they may have never had the opportunity to interact with otherwise. Fashion trends are pulled from all corners of the internet and change rapidly. Vivian Kopka’27 shares her view of the shift in personal style, “I think fashion used to be a statement of your person, but now it’s just a statement of wealth and ability to tap in with trends.”

While there are styles more synonymous with the LGBTQ+ community, it is important to note that there is a large intersection between queer fashion and fashion in the Black community. Both communities were heavily intertwined in the 1970s through the 1990s, forming solidarity and mixing of cultures. Clothing like baggy jeans, expressive jewelry, and bell bottoms are a few examples.

Aside from general style aesthetics, queer fashion

includes more specific items of clothing or accessories called flagging. Flagging is the addition of community wide agreed upon pieces worn originally with the sole purpose of signaling your identity to other queer people. Often these items also express sexual preferences. Flagging is a way to visually connect with other queer people in the know. Some modern examples are lesbians clipping carabiners to the left or right side of jeans, gay men piercing their right ear, and asexuals wearing a black ring on their middle finger.

As more and more straight people begin to adopt queer styles and use flagging items purely for fashion, some LGBTQ+ community members voice their discomfort. Tess Hunter’27, who identifies as a lesbian, believes “It can be damaging if not done with the understanding that it is a part of queer culture.” She shared her frustration that trends taken from the LGBTQ+ community are often style choices that queer people were previously ridiculed for.

There is also a discussion of safety for queer people. Flagging was created to communicate not only that you are queer, but that you are also a safe space for other queer people. When straight people adopt queer styles, fashion no longer becomes a reliable indicator of a stranger’s tolerance. TikTok user @shaneylorpretty posted “queer people have clothing codes for safety and then straight people use them for fashion. We have a problem when they attack us or become homophobic when we assume they are gay as well.” Autumn Green’23, a straight woman who describes her style as “looking very queer,” said she is constantly mistaken as a lesbian due to her style. While Green labels herself as an ally, with the rise in popularity of queer culture, not every person can be assumed to be so.

## The Band Too Cool for the Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame

By CIAN McKEOWN

[guitar.com](http://guitar.com)



Despite being eligible for Cleveland, Ohio’s hallowed Rock ‘n’ Roll Hall of Fame since 1996, induction has eluded the greatest Irish band of all time.

Thin Lizzy released its debut album in 1971 and remains one of the most eclectic and boundary-pushing rock acts of their generation. While the band was nominated in 2020, they have sat and watched in the intervening years as far inferior acts, such as Foreigner and Bad Company, are enshrined without them. They have even ceased to be mentioned on listicles of long-time snubbees who should get their due. This neglects to include the countless non-rock acts (great in their own right) that have been welcomed into the hall since Thin Lizzy’s eligibility began.

In 1969, bassist, songwriter, and brashly charismatic frontman Phil Lynott formed Thin Lizzy with longtime friend and drummer Brian Downey and guitarist Brian Bell on the streets and in the rowdy pubs of Dublin, Ireland. From their eponymous debut and throughout their first few releases, Thin Lizzy crafted an inventive blend of the psych-tinged blues revivalist sensibilities pioneered by Cream and the Peter Green era Fleetwood Mac, combined with their own Irish folk influences and

bittersweet balladry, to create a layered sound that was uniquely theirs.

Lynott also began to develop his talent for evocative and narrative lyrics. As Beloit College visiting instructor of English and longtime Thin Lizzy fan John Porcellino says, “Phil Lynott was really unique, I think he was just a great storyteller.” Lynott would weave dingy working-class fables colored with alcoholism, violence, lost loves, and drug abuse, becoming hard rock and metal’s Irish answer to the supremely crafted stories of Gordon Lightfoot and Bruce Springsteen. These elements, juxtaposed with Lynott’s creative inflections and unique, soulful vocals, helped Thin Lizzy stand out as a rock ‘n’ roll oddity.

Twin lead guitarists Brian Robertson and Scott Gorham joined the fold for the band’s fourth studio album, 1974’s “Nightlife.” And with 1975’s breakout LP “Fighting,” the band fully grew into a pumped-up and energetic hard rock sound typified by flashy leads and spellbinding solos from the aforementioned axemen. Their commercial peak

came early the next year, after the band dropped what would be their defining album, for better or worse, in the form of a rollicking arena-ready set that remained true to their Irish roots. “Jailbreak” peaked in the top 20 on Billboard’s album chart in the United States and at number five in Canada. John Porcelino describes picking up a \$5 compact disc version of the album at Walmart and recalls, “From the first listen, it blew my mind [how] consistently excellent it was. So that’s when I was like: ‘I have to check this [band] out.’”

Its blockbuster singles included the title track and the anthemic “The Boys Are Back in Town,” the latter of which hit number 12 on the Billboard charts. These songs have formed much of Thin Lizzy’s legacy stateside, becoming staples on classic rock radio, and have been viewed by the American public at large as their only notable works. An optimistic fan might hope that the era of streaming and a decreased dependence on chart position and airplay for mass exposure might lead American audiences to take a

listen to their nearly flawless run of albums throughout the seventies. But alas, fan voters and committee voters alike seem to continually turn a deaf ear to these rock masterpieces as the years pass, from the snarling and heavy “Bad Reputation,” to the sentimental yet equally heavy moodpiece laden with character-based vignettes that is “Johnny the Fox.” Scattered throughout these releases is guitarist Garry Moore, who would become a key weapon in Thin Lizzy’s formidable live sound.

This is not to mention the coda to their classic period, “Black Rose: A Rock Legend,” an album that features Thin Lizzy’s hard rock concoction at its best, oscillating between catchy pop rock anthems and metal with honey-coated ballads and sprawling prog-rock tableaus based on Irish folklore thrown in for good measure. As Porcelino puts it, “I love all of them, even the metal ones. That’s what I tell people, even their metal ones are good.”

[Read the rest on roundtable.beloit.edu](http://Read the rest on roundtable.beloit.edu)

# THE <sup>ZOO</sup> BOOK OF THE ROUND TABLE

## HOROSCOPES

what animal are you? don't answer that I make the decisions here



**Aries (Mar 21-Apr 19)**  
Aries, you are the proud and noble lion. King of the jungle. You yearn for the open savannah and the tender neck of a gazelle between your jaws. To really get into the role you should start eating exclusively raw meat and stop shaving. Let that mane show, baby.



**Taurus (April 20-May 20)**  
Taurus you are a snake



**Gemini (May 21-Jun 21)**  
Who are you, Gemini? Who, who indeed? You are the stoic owl. Your spirit is free, but your body is trapped in a veil of fluffy feathers. You call endlessly into the dark of the night, the only reply the echo of your own voice. Deep stuff, bro. Deep stuff.



**Cancer (Jun 22-Jul 22)**  
OOA! OOA! KOOBABASIMBA! That's the sound you make, Cancer, because you are a vole



**Leo (July 23-Aug 22)**  
Leo, I know you wanted to be a lion, but you're just like, not. You are a koala. It's not so bad, though. You can eat all the eucalyptus you want and no one can stop you. Your brain is like smooth though. Would probably bounce.



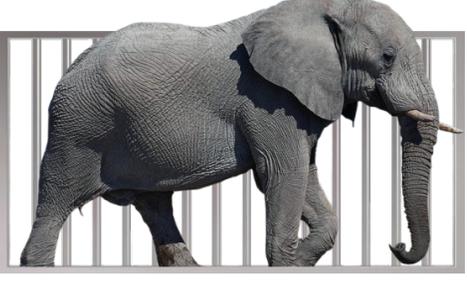
**Virgo (Aug 23-Sep 22)**  
Virgo you are a polar bear. This would be very cool except for the fact that you have climate change to contend with. Good luck with that.



**Libra (Sep 23-Oct 23)**  
Libra you're a giraffe. That might sound good, but it actually sucks, okay? Just trust me. You have like 90% more neck to break. And your legs look really stupid with how tall you are. And also leopard print is out.



**Scorpio (Oct 24-Nov 21)**  
Scorpio, you're a scorpion. Not because of your star sign, but because you are evil



**Sagittarius (Nov 22-Dec 21)**  
Sagittarius, you're an elephant. You're big and gray and wrinkly and I guess you have a good memory or something but could an elephant bake a loaf of bread from scratch, no only a human could do that, so checkmate elephant apologists



**Capricorn (Dec 22-Jan 19)**  
Capricorn you are a flamingo. Your flamboyance is cool but kind of woke so people are going to try and strangle you.



**Aquarius (Jan 20-Feb 18)**  
Aquarius, you are a zebra. Gallop, run free! Dazzle your enemies with your stripes. Never let the haters catch you. You are a nomad forever, and nothing will stop you from eating shrubs or starting an independent jewelry store.



you will be missed

**Pisces (Feb 19-Mar 20)**  
worm

