

# What really goes into National Act



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

Students dance at last year's National Act, performed by BigXthePlug on March 22, 2025 in the Allen Center.

PHILIP HARVEY '29  
STAFF WRITER

This Saturday, Wabash will transform the Knowing Fieldhouse into a concert venue as National Act returns. Rapper Nardo Wick is coming all the way from Florida to perform for the College. The event represents the culmination of a year-long planning process designed to unify the campus through high-energy music.

What some people may not know, however, is that the selection process for the headliner actually began almost immediately after the previous year's show. The process comes down to balancing student desire, practical logistics and the reality that even tens of thousands of dollars is a tight budget for pulling a big name star. The student senate's National Act committee

uses How To Concerns LLC as their agency to acquire the headlining performer.

"This was the biggest name we could get with the money that we have," said National Act Committee Chairman Bennett Strain '26. "We really wanted Waka Flocka, but he just released an album with Metro Boomin. Because of that, his price skyrocketed while we were still in the process of trying to book him. From there, we landed on Nardo, who we felt was also a fitting choice."

Coordinator of Student Success Vic Lindsay, who acted as the bridge between the National Act Committee and college administration, explained that the sweet spot for Wabash is in the \$30,000-\$40,000 range. The two kinds of artists they target are up-and-comers

who may go on to outgrow a stage like Wabash or established names who are past their prime. An ironic example of the former came when Wabash booed now-then rap superstar Jack Harlow before his career really took off.

Planning National Act only seems to be booking talent, but under the hood, much more goes on in order to make the concert a well-oiled machine. Landing on a weekend with as few scheduling conflicts as possible is another challenge. The artist's, athletic department's and campus' schedules all have to align for the most part. This year's National Act fortunately sees less away athletic competitions than normal. However, it falls on the same day as a volleyball match against Trine, a track and field event in Atlanta, Georgia, a baseball game in University Heights, Ohio and tennis matches in Terre Haute, Indiana.

The College has contracted with Sizzlin Sound Production LLC, a local business in Crawfordsville. Their job is to take care of all the essentials for a concert.

"We need to get everything for the stage. We also have to worry about lights, seating and sound

Continued page 2

# Racist stickers vandalize campus

OWEN VERMEULEN '28  
NEWS EDITOR

"End White Replacement."

These are the words that greeted many Wabash students in the early afternoon of March 23. Multiple stickers were placed around campus. One called for the end of "White Replacement" with the Turning Point USA (TPUSA) logo. Another said "White Working class Pride" and displayed a symbol commonly associated with white supremacist groups.

Wabash Director of Safety and Security Buck Waddell reported that stickers were placed at the corner of Wabash Avenue and Grant Avenue, on the flagpole on the mall, over an Edward Brooke poster near the flagpole that the Malcolm X Institute of Black Studies (MXIBS) erected in commemoration of Black History Month and on the Arch's light pole.

Emails denouncing the messages swiftly arrived in inboxes. Dean of Students Scott Brown and President of the College Scott Feller, as well as President of the Student Senate Austin Pickett '26, issued statements to the student body.

"I am disgusted by these remarks," said Pickett. "There is no place on our campus and in our brotherhood for hate to be spread against any group. We are here to be gentlemen and come together as brothers united by the message of Wabash, but these messages are short of those ideals."

Dean Brown clarified that there was a potential suspect that the Crawfordsville Police Department (CPD) was investigating. Waddell confirmed this, elaborating that Campus Security is on the look out.

"We are working in conjunction with CPD detectives regarding this issue," said Waddell. "They have a description of our person of interest along with our safety team and we will be looking out for this person on our campus."

This incident came after there were rumours that a TPUSA chapter would soon be founded on campus. One of the major advocates for bringing TPUSA to campus was president of College Republicans Owen Miller '27. He was very clear that these stickers had nothing to do with their goals and did not condone their placement.

"On behalf of the executive committee, we would like to clarify that these stickers are not authorized or affiliated with Turning Point USA," said Miller. "We also want to emphasize that the message displayed on these stickers does not reflect our values or mission."

No matter the identity of the culprit, the message was heard across campus. Many felt hurt and attacked in their own community. This is especially prev-

alent in the shadow of so many other acts of hatred at Wabash, including the vandalism of the MXIBS in 2021 and multiple attacks on other groups across campus in recent years.

"The MXIBS condemns the racist and divisive messages displayed on our campus," said MXIBS Chairman Jordan Olarewaju '27. "The presence of materials rooted in aims to divide and separate our campus does not belong here. Period. This includes the defacement of the infographic of a respected Black figure like Edward Brooke, which is unacceptable and does not reflect the values we strive to uphold as a Wabash community. Regardless of who it was, it was completely unnecessary and does not stand at a place like Wabash."

Even though the stickers were promptly removed, their marks remain. The pain they caused is undeniable. Many are relieved to hear that this act was not perpetrated by a Wabash community member, but many are also ready to see how members of Wabash react and choose to lend their support.



COURTESY OF DIRECTOR OF SAFETY AND SECURITY BUCK WADDELL

One of the stickers that appeared on campus Monday, March 23. Created in the early twentieth century, the symbol above is used by neo-nazis.

# A midterms preview: one columnist's thoughts on November's biggest races

ELIJAH WETZEL '27  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Midterm elections are usually seen as a referendum of the governing party. In November, voters across the country will have their say on the first half of President Trump's second stint in office, a term in which Republicans have controlled the triumvirate of the U.S. House, Senate and White House. Questions abound: will rising stars unseat entrenched veterans? Will the Democrats overcome a lackluster 2024 and emerge with a new vision for America?

I certainly don't have all the answers to those questions. But after some spring primary results rolled in this month, we're beginning to have a better picture of how November might shape up. Below, I analyze three key states and forecast what impact they may have come November.

Texas

The Lone Star State has long been one of the most reliably red states in national elections. No Democrat has won a statewide election there since 1994, but progressives are hoping they can reverse that trend by rallying behind Texas Rep. James

Talarico, a soft-spoken Presbyterian seminarian and school teacher who won the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate seat up for grabs in November. Talarico has gained national attention for his soul-

ful plea that unity and understanding should be the basis for politics, not vitriol. Sounds novel, right? Well, it's working so

Continued page 2



COURTESY OF KUT NEWS

State representative and U.S. Senate hopeful James Talarico (D) is vying to become the first Democrat elected to a statewide office in Texas since 1994.

# Cuba suffers under US policies

American embargos and sanctions are primed to have far-reaching humanitarian consequences on the island nation

HUTCH NORRIS '27  
STAFF WRITER

While many have focused on the United States' military operations overseas, Cuba is being crushed by American embargos, blockades and sanctions. The primary source of the suffering is the United States' oil blockade between Venezuela and Cuba. Cuba has received no shipments of crude oil to the island in 2026, but last January, they received over two million barrels.

President Trump signed an executive order January 29 that declared a national emergency, giving himself authority to impose a blanket tariff on any country caught directly or indirectly selling oil to Cuba. Cuba is accused of aligning with "malign actors adverse to the United States," such as Russia, the People's Republic of China, Iran, Hamas and Hezbollah. This tariff primarily targeted

Mexico, the last oil supplier to Cuba aside from Venezuela, whose oil is now under control of the United States following Operation Absolute Resolve that abducted President Nicholas Maduro.

These economic impositions are a part of the Trump administration's move away from a globalist world order towards a more sectarian view of the world. The U.S. wants Cuba to enter its sphere of influence just like the country's involvement in Greenland, Iran and Venezuela. Historically, this is not a major divorce in American foreign policy as Cuban-American tensions eased under President Barack Obama, the first President to visit the country since Calvin Coolidge. Obama lifted travel and business restrictions that were reimposed by Trump in November 2017. Embargoes were raised further under the Biden administration in response to protests by the

Cuban diaspora in the US against the Cuban government.

"Trump is manufacturing a humanitarian crisis in the service of justifying military intervention," according to Byron K. Trippet Assistant Professor of Philosophy Jorge Montiel. "And this military intervention in Cuba is in the service of having Latin America be in the United States' sphere of influence. If we were so concerned with [the Cuban] people's human rights, one way in which we may show solidarity is by accepting refugees, right?"

This manufactured crisis will have real consequences at the local level. People will struggle to get by each and every day that the crisis drags on. In the past month, Cuba has experienced multiple nationwide blackouts, relying upon aid from the Nuestra América convoy that departed

Continued page 2

# News around the World

The week's biggest stories

ANTONY SANTAGATA '29  
STAFF WRITER

Afghanistan and Pakistan

As the war in Iran drags into its fourth week, another conflict in the east is quickly unfolding between two other countries: Afghanistan and Pakistan. With the media's attention mainly focused on Iran, this conflict has largely stayed out of the limelight, yet it is a conflict that has the possibility of major repercussions.

Pakistan, fed up with the Afghan Taliban, bombed Kabul and Kandahar, Afghanistan's two largest cities, on February 26 — right around when Israel and the U.S. began bombing Iran. Pakistan has accused the Taliban of harboring and supporting the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), who in recent years have caused much violence across Pakistan.

The irony of this situation is that the Taliban is a group that Pakistan once sheltered and aided. However, as Pakistan's Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif said, "Now it is open war between us."

"Pakistan's ordeal in Afghanistan is one that the United States was in not too long ago," said Associate Professor of Political Science Lorraine McCrary. "When the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the 1980s, the U.S. supplied weapons and arms to help the Mujahideen fight the Soviets. 20 years later, the Taliban were using those same weapons we gave them against us."

While Pakistan may be exaggerating the extent to which the Afghan government has aided the TTP, they have at a very minimum looked the other way. This conflict, however, is not the first time these two countries have clashed. In fact, Pakistan and Afghanistan have now clashed in four out of the last

five years. This time around, though, the scale of violence is higher than the last. There are also many grievances, still unaddressed, that pose a significant threat to the region and for future peace. Pakistan wants all TTP sanctuaries in Afghanistan fully dismantled, which is very unlikely to happen. Afghanistan has also vowed revenge since being bombed.

Meanwhile, the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan has been closed long before February 26, as it was closed in October of last year. Even before that, trade across the order had been steadily plummeting. Currently, the only thing moving across the border are Afghan refugees being sent home by Pakistan.

Russia and Ukraine

With the world's attention focused on Iran, many have been paying very little attention to the Russia-Ukraine war, which is now in its fourth year. However, there have been recent significant developments that have escaped the public eye. With spring quickly approaching and the weather beginning to turn, Russia has been carrying out large-scale attacks against the Ukrainian armed forces.

However, Russia has also been sustaining devastating casualties, suffering the highest losses since the invasion began in 2022. Russian attacks have also become far more susceptible to Ukrainian drone units, which has allowed Ukraine to inflict large casualties on Russia without risking too much of their manpower. Ukraine has also been striking targets deep in Russian territory, with around 110 missions being carried out since February.

What was originally supposed to be a quick and

Continued page 2

## Regional news

CONNOR PHILLIPS '28

STAFF WRITER

### ICE in Airports

As the Trump Administration deploys U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to more airports experiencing hours-long lines, the Indianapolis Airport Authority (IAA) is reporting that ICE will not assist Transportation Security Administration (TSA) officers at the Indianapolis International Airport for now.

But federal agents are arriving at other airports around the country where TSA lines have been longer, according to 'Border Czar' Tom Homan. Federal officers from Homeland Security Investigations and ICE's Enforcement and Removal Operations arrived at Atlanta's airport, where wait times have stretched for hours to help manage large crowds.

The Department of Homeland Security remains unfunded, as the Senate last week failed for the fifth time to pass a bill to fund the agency and ICE. Democrats and Republicans have continued to go back and forth on managing immigration and enforcement policies, but have not yet reached a consensus. As a result, thousands of TSA employees remain unpaid, and many have not reported to work, leading to longer lines.

ICE agents have also been seen at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport and New Jersey's Newark Liberty Airport. Federal agents are expected to be at 14 airports across the country, including New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport and Houston's George Bush Intercontinental Airport. The list is subject to change; Homan said there will be ICE agents at more airports.

### Local Impact from the Iranian War

Since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran, several essential items in Indiana have or will see a



COURTESY OF INDYSTAR

**Vehicles traveling I-70 could soon be charged a toll fee.**

sharp increase in their prices. The eight most popular fertilizers U.S. farmers depend on during the spring growing season have surged in price as ships carrying the chemicals are delayed in the Strait of Hormuz, just south of Iran, between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. Indiana Farm Bureau president Randy Kron stated on March 19 that before the war, fertilizer prices were already at the high end, and farmers here were just hoping to break even. Now, per Kron, farmers are facing an additional 30-40% increase in fertilizer costs. Rising fertilizer prices would raise the cost of growing an acre of corn by \$25 to \$33 and an acre of soybeans by \$11 to \$12. If those costs are scaled to a mid-sized Indiana farm of about 1,000 acres, farmers are looking at an extra \$17,000 to \$23,000 per year.

Oil prices have also spiked. Hoosiers are starting to feel the impact of rising fuel costs following the ongoing military conflict in Iran. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the most important links for trade in the entire world. The passage accounts for 20% of global oil and liquefied natural gas consumption. With it currently shut down, we can expect oil prices to continue to spike.

### New Tolls

Indiana has released its bid to toll Interstate 70 this month. The east-west route would be widened to six lanes, border to border. U.S. law generally bans user fees on the federally funded Interstate Highway System, with exceptions. Indiana's application, submitted in September, seeks a waiver under the Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program. Since the pilot's launch in 1998, several states have earned provisional approvals, reserving one of three slots. To date, however, no state has fully satisfied the program criteria. I-70's 156 miles in Indiana were completed in 1969. The Indiana Department of Transportation has since reconstructed 37 miles, widening those sections to six or more lanes. Reconstructing and widening the remaining 112 miles is expected to cost about \$5.4 billion in 2025 dollars or \$6.5 billion with projected inflation and bonding costs from 2028 to 2035. The application proposes a rate of 10 cents per mile for passenger vehicles, or \$15.60 to drive from Illinois to Ohio, and 54 cents per mile for large trucks, or \$84.24 for a border-to-border drive. Those without transponders would owe more.

## News around the world

*Continued from page 1*

swift victory for the Kremlin has been prolonged into a bloody war, greatly embarrassing Vladimir Putin and Russia. Despite a meeting in Miami, Florida over the weekend between American and Ukrainian negotiating teams, the possibility of Russia entering serious talks continues to remain extremely low.

**“This was Putin trying to say, ‘I’m a badass and I can do what I want.’ He clearly can’t.”**

- Associate Professor and Director of the Writing

Center  
“Putin’s invested too much,” said Associate Professor and Director of the Writing Center Zachery Koppelman. “There’s a philosophy in economics called the sunk cost fallacy. It’s the idea that someone gets so fixated on something that it must work, and they don’t

realize when it’s not. This has happened to Putin. Putin’s in a tricky spot because he has spent decades manicuring his public image in Russia to create a cult of persona around him. He isn’t going to walk away empty handed, and Zelenskyy isn’t going to give him anything.”

Before the Iran war, Russia would get most of its drones from Iran, but given that Iran is now in a conflict of its own, this will no longer be the case. In the next few months, Russia is going to have fewer drones to launch, which is going to benefit Ukraine. However, it likely won’t be long until Russia will be able to get drones internally.

“It is extremely unfortunate and horrific that such a large massacre, displacement of people and all this destruction had to occur simply to fulfill one person’s ego,” said Koppelman. “This was Putin trying to say, ‘I’m a badass and I can do what I want.’ He clearly can’t.”



COURTESY OF SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST

**Soldiers march behind a military vehicle in Ukraine.**

## Wetzel: midterm predictions

*Continued from page 1*

far for Talarico.

Things are more complicated for Texas Republicans. The Senate incumbent, John Cornyn (R), has held the seat since 2002 and is one of the most senior Republicans in the Senate. His primary opponent was Ken Paxton, the oft-embattled Texas Attorney General. Their race was an expensive and heated slugfest, and it’s not over. Neither candidate won a majority of the vote, so a runoff election will be held on May 26 to decide the Texas GOP’s man of the hour. President Trump has not endorsed either candidate, a sign of the intensely high stakes involved in this race. Trump is not known for his bashfulness, but even he wants to keep this one at arm’s length.

But what about November? For my money, Talarico’s chances of ending the Democrats’ drought will only get better while Paxton and Cornyn bludgeon each other in a dogfight. A recent Politico poll indicates Talarico may actually edge out both candidates in a general election at this point, but that might change if Trump decides to put the full weight of his MAGA machine behind one candidate before the runoff vote.

Texas Democrats should be wary, though. Beto O’Rourke’s near-miss in 2018, when he came within a few points of unseating Sen. Ted Cruz (R), proved that Democrats will likely need a once in a generation candidate and some GOP gaffes to win in the general election. It might be too early to tell with Talarico, but Republicans in Texas need to be careful they don’t ripen their own downfall with infighting.

### North Carolina

In the MAGA Republican party, one rule remains true. If you oppose President Trump, you better be ready for the blowback. North Carolina’s Sen. Thom Tillis (R) fell afoul of that rule when he voted against Trump’s One Big Beautiful Bill Act last summer. Not long after, he announced he would not seek a third term in 2026. Michael Whatley, a Trump-endorsed former Republican National Committee chair, swept to a commanding victory in the GOP primary. Similarly, Roy Cooper (D), a former eight-year governor of North Carolina, easily bested his competitors in the primary. Since 2008 North

Carolina has swung Republican in every presidential election. However, Cooper — who was in the running for former-Vice-President Kamala Harris’ VP spot in her unsuccessful 2024 campaign — remains a popular figure in the state. Most polls show Cooper ahead, and though Whatley is an experienced hand within the GOP, I doubt he’ll have the clout to beat Cooper.

### Maine

The Pine Tree State rarely grabs headlines, but this will be one of the most interesting states because, in my opinion, it will give us a sense of how sour voters are on the GOP. Here’s why I think that. U.S. Sen. Susan Collins (R) has held her seat since 1997, even as Maine has swung left — the state has voted swung blue in each of the last three election cycles. But Collins is getting older, voted with her party on some controversial topics and can expect no help from Trump. She’ll face intriguing competition in Janet Mills (D), the governor of Maine, or Graham Platner (D), a veteran and oysterman who has gained attention for his progressive politics. The Democratic primary will be June 9.

Collins needs cross-party voters to win. Right now, general election polls show that, versus either Platner or Mills, the race will be a toss up. If Collins wins, it’s a sign that, as much as he can isolate many voters, association with Trump’s Republican party is not an automatic no-go for centrist Democrats. It might also suggest that a Republican could take the governorship in Maine (Mills is term-limited). If Collins loses, it’s a sign that Republicans have some serious work to do before 2028.

Here’s the bottom line: the GOP needs to retain both houses if they want the second half of Trump’s second term to be successful, and after a poor showing in the 2024 elections, Democrats need a bounce back 2026 to set themselves up for the next presidential election. I doubt either side will have the momentum for any sort of “wave” to occur, but I expect the Republicans’ Congressional seat advantage will decrease if things stay as they are right now. But if there’s one thing I do know, it’s that things will certainly change before November. In which way? We shall see.

## Cuba suffers under US policies



COURTESY OF AL JAZEERA

**United States oil embargo on Cuba has created an economic crisis, leading to several national blackouts in the past month .**

*Continued from page 1*

from Mexico on March 20. This convoy provided crucial aid for Cubans in this time of crisis. The convoy was organized by Progressive International, with many individuals from the flotilla to Gaza last year

present in this effort as well. Co-general coordinator David Adler reported that “50 tons of material aid for starving families and sick patients” were shipped to the island as a part of the convoy.

The primary consequences

are obvious: water and homes are not heated and food is not refrigerated. The further subsequent effects are more difficult to see immediately.

“You need energy to run things like x-ray or dialysis machines, ultrasounds or to perform technical operations,” said Professor of Biology and Global Health Initiative Director Eric Wetzel. “Many medications need to be kept cold, and folks might not be able to pump water to where it’s needed. The public health system is reportedly on the verge of total collapse.”

The extent of this humanitarian crisis could be severely detrimental for the health of the country, people’s daily functions and critical medical needs. The Cuban government seems to be entering similar stages that Iran was in prior to the current war. Talks have opened between both parties, and Trump is interested in some form of American control in exchange for relief for the Cuban people.

## Wabash prepares for Nardo Wick’s performance for National Act

*Continued from page 1*

while having it all organized,” said Lindsay. “If the event were outside, we’d also have to get portable toilets, generators and barricades. On top of that, we would need private security on hand.”

The final requirement for the event is slightly smaller. The stars often personally request items for themselves. Most of it is food, which hardly gets touched. Frequently the college denies requests for alcohol. Interestingly enough, Wick has specifically requested he be provided “Glide” floss tooth picks for the event.

Other festivities begin well before Nardo’s headliner performance at 8:00 p.m. EST. The committee has gotten My Yellow Rickshaw to open the show at 6:30 p.m. EST.

“We kept with the rap/hip-hop main artist, but we’re also providing an opener who is not really in that same genre,” said Strain. “It’s a different genre of music, which I think can tailor to people who may not be interested in a rap artist. We want the opening act to help the unifying aspect of the event.”

Additionally, the Interfraternity Council (IFC) Megagate will run from noon until 6:00 p.m. EST outside of the Allen Center, featuring a food truck and a relay race as the final

event of their annual Pan-Hel.

“We’re hoping for a good day with beautiful weather and a good turn out,” said IFC President Kyle Foster ’27. “We know the National Act Committee put a lot of work into the event. We want every fraternity to show up for Megagate and also the volleyball game beforehand.”

Current RSVP’s sit at roughly 1,523 with 458 of them being students. The college expects the final crowd to number between a record-setting 1,800 and 2,000 people after fraternity guests and day-of attendees are counted.

The final portion of the night will be an after party at Lambda Chi Alpha, who has hosted this for the past few years.

“Our party is one aspect of an overall great day,” said Lambda

Chi Alpha President Elijah Wetzel ’27. “There’s going to be a ton for people to do, and I think our role is just being another place for people to be together and create memories.”



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

**BigXthePlug performs during National Act at Chadwick Court.**



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

**Students smile in enjoyment at last year’s National Act concert on March 22, 2025, headlined by BigXthePlug.**

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## 🏀 March Madness 🏀

WILL DUNCAN '27  
PHOTO EDITOR

One week in, and March Madness has already given us some of the craziest finishes we've seen in our lives. The unpredictability of the tournament has held true yet again as my bracket was a swing-and-a-miss at best. As we head into the Sweet 16, here are some of the storylines, games and stars to watch.

### Reigning Champs Fall; One Seeds look defeatable

In one of the more surprising games of the tournament, Florida fell apart in the late stages against Iowa on Sunday. With the Gators heading to the couch much earlier than everyone expected, their title defense is over — and the door is wide open. Now the question becomes: “which one seed is next?”

Michigan has looked impressive through two rounds, while Alabama hasn't exactly been tested yet. The Wolverines frontcourt has really put teams in a bind, and the Crimson Tide might be next in line to get dominated in the paint. However, if Alabama's Labaron Philon Jr. is on — after a 29-point opener followed by a lackluster second round — this game changes entirely. Alabama might need to borrow a defensive game plan from the football staff — because they're going to need it.



COURTESY OF USA TODAY

The Arizona and Arkansas face-off may be the best matchup of the Sweet 16. The Wildcats have won both their games by an average margin of 23 points. The star freshmen pair of Koa Peat and Brayden Burries have been everything we've expected them to be and more. I'm curious to see how the Razorbacks and Coach John Calipari match up with them, and if Arizona can keep Darius Acuff Jr. quiet, a task no team has been able to do recently. I like Arizona squeaking out a win, but take the Razorback's spread.

Duke, who gave every person in America a scare against Siena, still hasn't earned full trust back. The Blue Devils are headed to Washington D.C. to face the Red Storm of St. John's. This is bound to be the best coaching matchup in the tournament: Rick Pitino and Jon Scheyer. With talent on both sides, this one likely comes down to the wire (Duke is favored by 6.5, but I like St. John's to cover).

### Glass Slipper... or Cowboy Boot?

The Texas Longhorns are the only double-digit seed in the Sweet Sixteen, and there's a real chance they can mosey on to the Elite Eight. Cinderella must've exchanged her tiara for a cowboy hat. They match up with the Boilermakers and Braden Smith, the newest record-holder

for the most assists in NCAA history. Though Purdue has looked really solid through two rounds, Texas may take the win. A battle-tested team that knows how to win tight games in the late stages. This really separates the two teams, as Purdue hasn't struggled with many close games yet. All three of Texas's wins this tournament have been within eight points — a sign that this team is made for late-game situations. Purdue currently sits as a 7.5 point favorite.

### Tom Izzo vs. Dan Hurley

Another toss-up in the East, Michigan State vs. UConn brings experience, coaching and a ton of star power. The Huskies have been in some concerningly tight games so far, yet when their stars need to step up, they're more than ready. Senior forward Alex Karaban put up a career-high 27 points against UCLA, along with freshman guard (and Indiana's own) Braylon Mullins chipping in 17. But as all college basketball fans know, you cannot count out Tom Izzo in March. Michigan State has had comfortable wins in the first two rounds, but the game versus the Huskies will be anything but that. I'm really interested to see how UConn tries to slow down sophomore guard Jeremy Fears Jr., who through two games has 27 assists. Whoever wins will surely give the winner of Duke and St. John's a difficult time.

### Wait, they're still playing?

When I said the South Region would be unpredictable, this is what I meant. A Sweet 16 matchup that no one even thought was possible: Iowa facing off against Nebraska. We will have the epitome of a “Midwest Big Ten team” heading to the Elite Eight. The question is, which one? Yes, it's a shock both the Hawkeyes and Cornhuskers are here, but these two teams honestly deserve more credit than anyone else left in March. Iowa in my eyes has the best win of the tournament, knocking off the Gators with a game-deciding three-pointer in the late stages. Yet, Nebraska's tight win against Vanderbilt may be equally as impressive (although every Nebraska fan should be thanking the basketball gods that Vandy's halfcourt shot rattled out). It's not pretty, but one of these teams will be headed to the Elite Eight. Whoever wins this game will face a steep climb against either Houston or Illinois.

As March moves on, the chaos will only build — buzzer beaters, heart-break and moments you can't predict. That's what makes this tournament one of the greatest sports spectacles: no one knows what's coming next so enjoy it while it lasts!

## 'Project Hail Mary' launches a lighthearted adventure



COURTESY OF TMDB

NOAH MINTIE '29  
FEATURES EDITOR

After a turbulent start, the state of the film industry this decade is finally looking up. In the last five years, sci-fi blockbusters that do numbers because of intriguing premises and popular movie stars would have felt like too much to ask for. Fortunately, Phil Lord and Christopher Miller's “Project Hail Mary” is reeling viewers in by the millions, a feat it is well-positioned to earn. It is a joy to see movies like this back in the theaters, though whether it can conserve its longevity is up to question.

With no crewmates, no communications and no idea how he got on a spaceship hurtling away from Earth, science teacher Ryland Grace (played by a spunky Ryan Gosling) has a narrow chance to save the entire universe from an oppressive threat. Thankfully Rocky, an adorable and well-realized alien, is there to aid his frightening odds. As the film progresses, Grace's memory reconstructs. This amounts to intermittent flashbacks which break up the isolation of the deep space sequences.

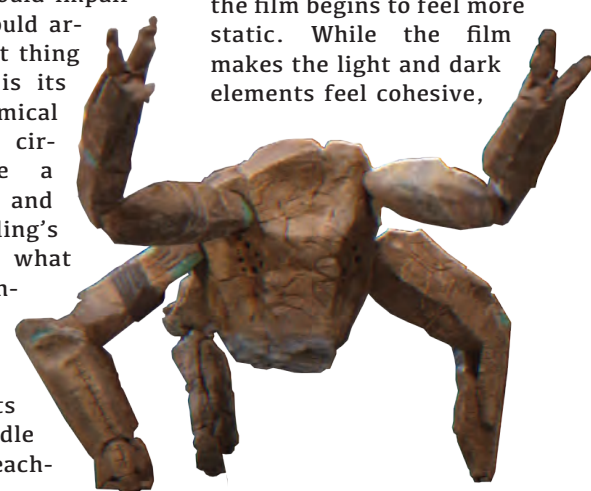
Despite how gloomy the premise sounds, rest assured that “Project Hail Mary” wastes no time loading up its script with jokes. While one might fear that this would impair the stakes, I would argue that the best thing about the film is its tone. The comical levity and dire circumstances are a perfect sweet and salty mix. Gosling's performance is what fuses these ingredients. He brings all of the lovable dorkiness one expects from a cool middle school science teacher.

Down on Earth, Eva Stratt (a scientist played by Sandra Hüller) is the stable rock that perfectly compliments Gosling's uncertain goofiness. Hüller never disappoints, so the big surprise of the supporting cast is Rocky. He (or rather, the computer that translates him) is voiced by James Ortiz, and brought to life with incredible special effects, both digital and practical. By the film's end, he is just as much of a character as any of the people.

Lord and Miller, who have earned their stripes with revolutionary films like “Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse” and “The Lego Movie,” bring their usual directorial flair. Just like those films, the blocking, framing and especially the use of color and aspect ratios in “Project Hail Mary” are all very good. That said, these traits earn their fanfare from derivation rather than invention. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sound design, which is disappointingly standard. When the film enralls the viewer, it is never a sonic achievement.

The slick execution and bubbly tone establish a twisty relationship with the script. The choice to adapt a novel by Andy Weir (the author of “The Martian” and known for his realistic and accessible science fiction) for a Lord and Miller film is a solid match, as sincere, comedic adventures come easily to both parties. However, there are moments where the optimism and excitement become overbearing.

One might ask: did I not just praise the tone above everything else? Yes, I maintain that the tone is exceptional, but the mood leaves something to be desired. A film's mood can be defined by a more broadly conveyed feeling, whereas the tone is specific to certain elements of the plot and filmmaking. The issue is not that serious moments are absent from the film, because they are certainly there. It is that there is so much energy in between them that the film begins to feel more static. While the film makes the light and dark elements feel cohesive,



COURTESY OF SONY PICTURES

the balance is still off. A great tone does not always guarantee an effective mood.

This clues into “Project Hail Mary's” biggest problem: its pacing. The 156 minute runtime is not a problem exclusive to this film. Nearly every studio blockbuster that releases nowadays basically demands an entire afternoon from the viewer, and that is even before factoring in the trailers. Long movies bear the challenge of legitimizing their temporal real estate, and “Project Hail Mary” feels like a 90-minute premise stretched to fit a modern 120+ minute standard. Upon a first viewing, this problem feels tolerable because everything is new, but with the inevitable march of time, “Project Hail Mary” will struggle to retain its popularity.

Funnier adventures and more epic space voyages manage to do far more with less time. Comparing “2001: A Space Odyssey” or “Interstellar” to “Project Hail Mary” may sound unfair, but the fact is that that is how it will be judged. The difference between a great time at the movies and a great movie feels slight but becomes significant. Were “Project Hail Mary” to cut down a few plot points, it would become a tighter overall experience without sacrificing much. The tone, effects, and overall presentation will net this film many fans, not so much the extended technobabble.

Dwelling on the movie's faults in the face of an enthusiastic audience with a hunger for good filmmaking is a mistake that too many critics have fallen for in their analysis of this movie. The job of a critic is not so much to platform an opinion stapled to an arbitrary score. It is to further the reader's understanding of an artwork: that “Project Hail Mary” is a complicated flavor of good and should not distract anyone from the fact that it is still very good.

It feels like every other review starts or ends with me musing about “the modern state of filmmaking.” The truth is that every movie that *The Bachelor* reviews could change the tides of the industry. “Project Hail Mary” is uniquely positioned to succeed across all audiences. I sincerely hope that it forms a tsunami of exciting new filmmaking as this turbulent decade concludes.

**FINAL VERDICT:**  
**3.5/5 WALLYS**



## Nardo Wick listening guide



COURTESY OF XXL MAG

BRADY REEVES '29  
STAFF WRITER

National Act is right around the corner and popular rapper Nardo Wick is performing on campus. Wick is a renowned trap rapper and while most don't listen to his music regularly, I am here to help. For those of you that don't really know what to listen to, here is a guide on what to expect, music wise, from this performance.

“Dah Dah Dahdah” is a song from Wick that has probably the catchiest beats of his discography. The song is inspired by the nursery rhyme, Gingerbread Man. During the middle of his song he cuts to a moment where the nursery

rhyme plays. This leads into an insane beatdrop that carries the second half of the song. There is a really good chance that this song will be played at the concert and a good possibility that this will be his lead song.

“Wicked Freestyle” has a wild intro that brings the audience into an incredible freestyle. He has a child choir sing the beginning and the ending of the song. This contrasts his style of trap rap. This song has incredible flow and powerful 808s. Toward the end of the song he cuts himself out and says, “I'm done, just playing” and cuts back into the beat like nothing happened. This switch is completely un-

expected. This song will probably be in the show.

“Me or sum” is another one of his hits. This song features Future and Lil Baby to match the trap beats that Wick usually raps on. This beat is unique though. It has a different vibe than what he usually sings on. Lil Baby drops a crazy verse in the middle of the song followed by smooth vocals on a Future verse. These two match Nardo Wick exceptionally well with their style of singing. I hope that this song is played because of the vocals.

“Hot boy” is another song featuring Lil Baby. This song features a really catchy chorus that is displayed at the beginning of the song. Lil Baby has an incredible feature with great flow and a verse that could be one of the best I've heard from him. Nardo Wick's verses in this go incredibly hard. I am really hoping that this song is played because this would take control of the crowd.

“Back to back” has another showing of Future. This song starts off slower than his other songs on the list. Then Future changes this tone immediately. It violently switches into a typical trap beat with hard 808s. Wick spits a verse that speaks louder than the lyrics. The tone of his voice

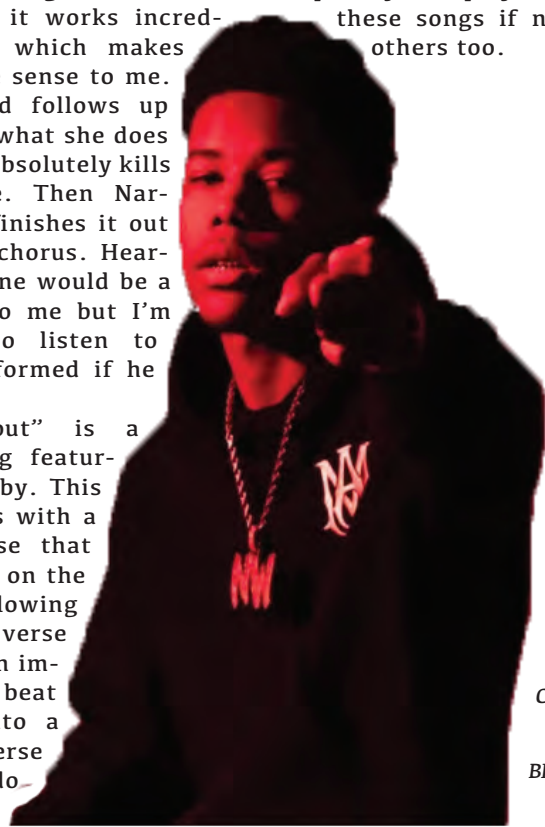
depicts something not standard for himself. Future ends the song with his final verse that makes the song one of his catchier songs.

“Somethin'” starts off with a sample from Ice JJ Fish that turns into the craziest switch up. It goes from slow and mellow to something that feels evil. This transition was the last thing I was expecting when listening to Nardo Wick. Somehow it works incredibly well which makes very little sense to me. Sexy Red follows up and does what she does best and absolutely kills her verse. Then Nardo Wick finishes it out with the chorus. Hearing this one would be a shocker to me but I'm curious to listen to it be performed if he plays it.

“Pop out” is a third song featuring Lil Baby. This one starts with a Baby verse that goes hard on the beat. Following a tame verse there is an immediate beat switch into a violent verse by Nardo Wick.

The beat refuses to stay the same with another beat switch into a second Lil Baby verse. This going back and forth action might be the reason that this one is one of his hits.

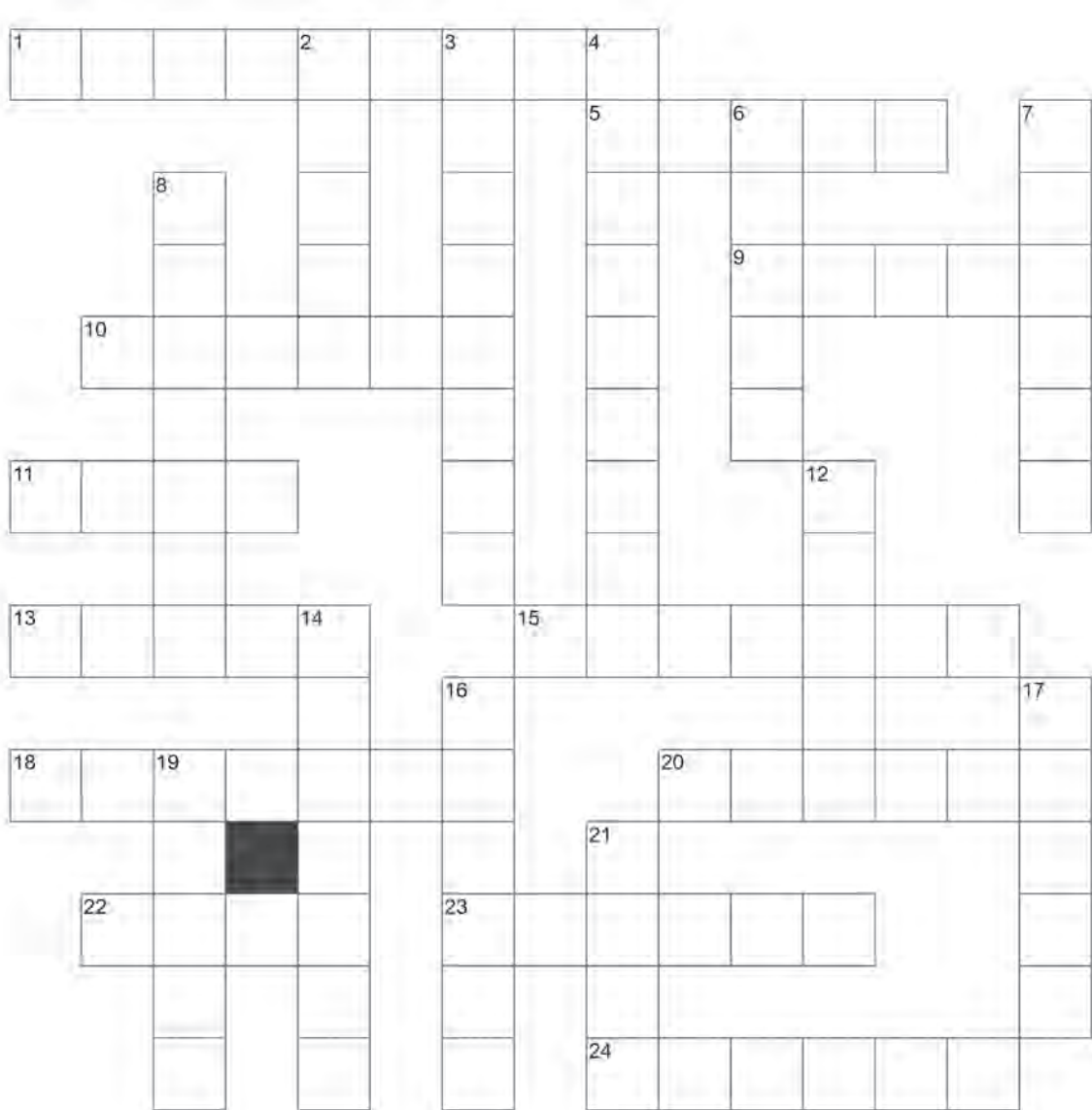
Nardo Wick is going to put on one heck of a show this weekend. This guide should help people that aren't too familiar with the Trap genre be prepared for a good time. Hopefully he plays most of these songs if not some others too.



COURTESY  
OF  
BILLBOARD

# 'Space'

Crossword by Tanner Quackenbush '26



Across

- 1. Person who travels into space
- 5. Our home planet, third from the Sun
- 9. Hottest planet, Earth's cloudy twin
- 10. Bowl-shaped impact on a planet
- 11. Massive ball of burning gas
- 13. Saturn's distinctive icy features
- 15. Smallest planet, closest to the Sun
- 18. Farthest planet, a blue ice giant
- 20. NASA program that landed on the Moon
- 22. Natural satellite orbiting a planet
- 23. Ice giant that rotates on its side
- 24. Ringed gas giant, sixth from the Sun

Down

- 2. Path a planet takes around the Sun
- 3. Rocky object orbiting the Sun, also a belt
- 4. Instrument to see distant space objects
- 6. Mobile robot exploring planetary surfaces
- 7. Relating to space and the universe
- 8. Surface features of a planet
- 12. Dwarf planet with five moons
- 14. First artificial Earth satellite
- 16. Giant cloud of gas and dust in space
- 17. Icy body with a tail
- 19. Unmanned spacecraft for exploration
- 21. The Red Planet, fourth from the Sun

Scan for answers!



## SENIOR SPOTLIGHT

### Tobey Condon empowers his citizenship

CARTER RAMSEY '29  
STAFF WRITER

What does it look like when a man squeezes everything he can out of Wabash? Tobey Condon '26, a senior majoring in philosophy, politics and economics (PPE) has taken advantage of as much as one could from the college. Being from Watervliet, New York, Condon has felt the connections and experiences of small communities for most of his life, and that same small-community feeling was given to him here on campus as well. For Condon, his college years have helped him in all aspects of life. Wabash College has provided him with an environment that promoted and developed professional skills and encouraged him to be more outgoing with the goal of becoming the ideal student.

lege with his pledge class, as well as living and engaging with people from entirely different backgrounds, has improved his time at Wabash.

"When alumni come to campus and talk about life-long bonds, I finally know what they mean," said Condon. "It is thanks to the time I have spent with my pledge brothers and the time we have shared together."

Condon's fraternity brother Alexander Schmidt '27 has enjoyed getting to know Condon and has seen the way in which he lives out the ideal of a Wabash man.

"Tobey is a proud brother of Phi Psi," said Schmidt. "He is a great Wabash brother who always strives to put his best self forward whether it be socially or academically."

Ramsey Archives has also given him a deep appreciation for the rich history of this campus.

"I would implore students to engage meaningfully with Wabash's history," said D'Amico. "As it provides a sense of scale that is vital to being a successful student and a good member of the Wabash Community."

Condon feels that his field of study has benefited him greatly both in and out of the classroom, and believes that these areas of study are the perfect complement to a strong liberal arts education.

"In a time fraught with uncertainty and discourse, I've learned what it means to be a good citizen," said Condon. "I learned how to engage with a broad swath of topics that are essential to understanding our world today, how we got here, and what can be done moving forward."

After graduation, Condon plans to pursue a career in law, either through a graduate degree or work in the field of foreign or public policy. While his mind is not entirely made up, he gives thanks to his time here at Wabash for giving him new or different possibilities after college.

"I have always been driven by the goal of helping others," said Condon. "When I was younger, that goal took the form of a future career in the public sector, but through my time in college I've become more aware of the ways in which private organizations can advocate for the autonomy and empowerment of the individual."

Condon is proud to be a Wabash man and believes the struggles and adversity are a part of what makes this place so special.

"Being a Wabash man is a title only reserved for a worthy few," said Condon. "If your college experience is not challenging, you're selling yourself short. I might not always be thankful for it at the moment, but I deeply appreciate the fact that I am surrounded by classmates, fraternity brothers, faculty and staff who are encouraging me to push myself socially and academically."



PHOTO BY JEREMIAH RUNGE '29

Tobey Condon '26 won Wabash's Fall Moot Court Competition in the fall semester of 2025.

"Tobey is a rockstar," said Stephenson Institute for Classical Liberalism director Daniel D'Amico. "In class he leads the pack by taking the highest level of responsibility for the assignments and material. I was not surprised in the least that he took home the gold in moot court and a distinction pass on comps. He's the most reliable participant in co-curricular activities I've ever worked with and he writes like an angel."

Condon is a brother of Phi Kappa Psi. He has found that going through the experiences of col-

Condon has remained involved in both academics and extracurriculars including the Stephenson Institute. He has also worked for the Ramsey Archives since his freshman year. The involvement in these groups has deepened Tobey's appreciation for both his field of study as well as his connection to Wabash itself. He gives credit to the Stephenson Institute for not only enhancing his PPE education but for providing him with the opportunity to travel and see more of both the country and the world. Condon's time with the

## Authenticity at its finest: 'The Way I Am' Album by Luke Combs



COURTESY OF WIKIPEDIA

SEAN BLEDSOE '26  
SPORTS EDITOR

Just two years after his album "Fathers and Sons," Luke Combs delivered "The Way I Am," another powerful album to add to his collection. Combs is not new to making music that has a personal flare, but this album does the best job of fully encapsulating his authenticity. While he did take a similar heartfelt and self-fulfilling step like his friend and fellow artist Morgan Wallen, Combs completed this project with a unique stylistic tone by putting together a collection of 22 tracks that vary in tempo but all have meaningful lyrics.

Combs starts off the album with "Back in the Saddle," declaring to his fans that he is back on the scene. He practically says that the two-year hiatus from music was too long, but he tells everyone to not worry because the quality of music will be the same, if not better. It's a tone-setting song with a heart-pumping drum and guitar combination where he proclaims this album will deliver in every way possible.

I was not too thrilled with his second song, "My Kinda Saturday Night," because it felt eerily similar to another kicking-up-dust and boot-clanking song of his that's called "One Too Many." The high-pace guitar riffs and the drops in tone just made it feel like I've heard the same thing before. Don't get me wrong, the song made me want to dance, but I couldn't get the "One Too Many" vibes out of my head.

He does, however, follow this song up with an absolute banger. "Days Like These" is by far my favorite song on the album. While it may be because I have a soft spot for slowed down country love songs, the lyrics hit really close to home for me. When I heard, "When the sky is blue and the grass is green, how much better can it be? If I got you and you got me, we got everything we need. And even if it grew on trees, well, money can't buy days like these," my heart simply melted. I immediately thought of what it would be like to be sitting out on a porch with a significant other, holding their hand, and watching a beautiful and colorful sunset. On top of this, there is something to be said about an artist just relying on a single instrument to make a song hit the soul even harder. His eloquent plucking of the guitar strings solidifies this as one of the best country songs I've ever heard in my life.

Skipping down to the sixth song on the roster, "Daytona 499," I could not think of a better connection between NASCAR and country music to form a song about the speed at which romantic rela-

tionships move. He grapples with how love can be reckless in terms of moving fast and living life way too quickly by relating it to the high speeds seen at Daytona International Speedway.

"The Way I Am" is the namesake song of the album, and it is simply beautiful. The way he articulates his love for a significant other while being so self-deprecating is nothing short of perfection. He questions why his partner is loving him when there are plenty of other people in the world that he thinks are better than him, but his expression of gratitude for that person brings a tear to my eye. Also bonus points are in store because he made the song inclusive by not using "she" or "her" when talking to his partner. This is a country love song for all (something you rarely see)!

"Wish Upon a Whiskey" is a song that a lot of people need to listen to. Combs talks about how he has exhausted every option: wishing upon a shooting star and sending up prayers from the back pew of a church. As his last resort, he turns to a shot of whiskey. That one shot turns into an addiction where he's constantly numbing the pain with alcohol. The awareness he brings to alcohol dependence and addiction is something that should not be overlooked.

My second-favorite song of the album is "Sleepless in a Hotel Room," and it's for the simple reason that Combs gives this song his all. As listeners, we get the full range of his voice because of the passion he sings the song with.

Now a lot of people have mentioned "Be By You" as their favorite song on the album, and I can absolutely understand that. It's a simple heartwarming song about expressing his desire to be with his significant other all the time. I think it's safe to say that we all hope to have what he expresses in this song in our lives.

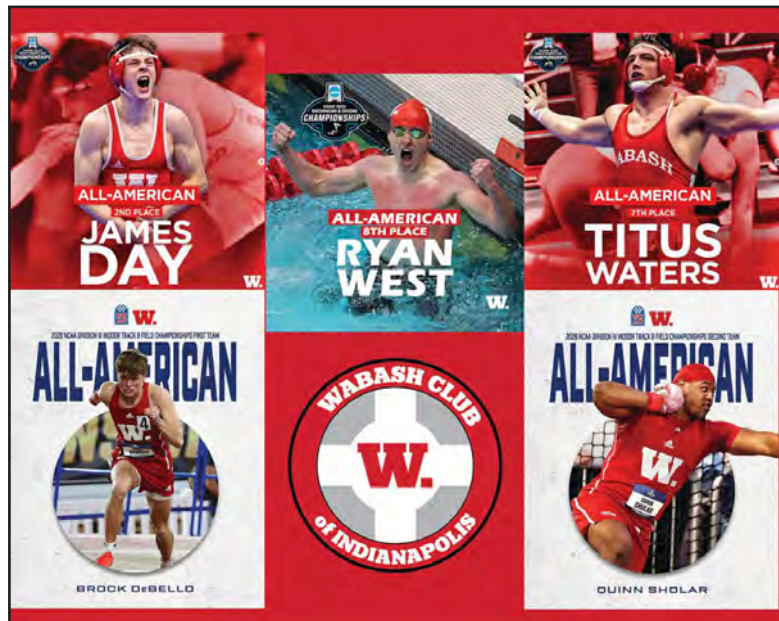
While these songs were some of the more notable ones in the album, there were a couple that fell a little flat. "Alcohol of Fame" was really nothing special. "Seeing Someone" needed a little extra punch to make it better. "Can't Tell Me I'm Wrong" is a



catchy tune, but it was too close to a Morgan Wallen song. Don't get me wrong — I like Morgan Wallen's music — but we're talking about Luke Combs here.

But despite those few songs that came up a little short in my eyes, this album is definitely one of his best, and I look forward to seeing what choices he makes for his music going forward.

FINAL VERDICT:  
4/5 WALLYS



Cheers to Our Little Giant All-Americans!

instagram.com/wabashclubofindianapolis

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The purpose of *The Bachelor* is to serve the school audience, including but not limited to administrators, faculty and staff, parents, alumni, community members and most importantly, the students. Because this is a school paper, the content and character within will cater to the student body's interests, ideas, and issues. Further, this publication will serve as a medium and forum for student opinions and ideas.

Although an individual newspaper, the Board of Publications publishes *The Bachelor*. The *Bachelor* and BOP receive funding from the Wabash College Student Senate, which derives its funds from the Wabash College student body.

Letters (e-mails) to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. They will only be published if they include name, phone, or e-mail, and are not longer than 800 words.

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Nathan  
Ellenberger '26

## Managing Editor

Reply to this opinion at  
nvelLENb26@wabash.edu

For the past several weeks, I have dedicated a significant amount of time in this paper to learning and thinking about AI, specifically as it relates to Wabash and its place in higher education at large. While I have tried to present all the facts objectively, it is impossible to walk away from this project without drawing some of my own conclusions.

I began this project with firmly pessimistic views on AI, and while I have softened somewhat, I remain skeptical. I worry about the many jobs and livelihoods disappearing in the name of economic efficiency. The massive data centers required to sustain AI are resource-intensive and environmentally destructive, and I doubt the economic benefit per square foot they promise to American towns that nevertheless bid to host them. As a student, it is obvious that the cognitive danger of off-loading mental labor onto AI is very real. Even outside an academic setting, I shudder at the thought that people could turn to AI for personal advice on subjects like romance or parenting.

Despite my skepticism, it would be dishonest to claim that AI offers no benefit at all. The sheer efficiency of large language models can streamline many tasks, allowing both laypeople and professionals to focus mental energy on other pressing matters. This efficiency is perhaps best used by experts, who have significant background knowledge in a field and can tailor their AI use in more powerful ways than writing papers and researching general knowledge.

I must also confess to experimenting with AI myself. Since I began to write about AI, I have become more comfortable using it as a learning tool. For example, in the course of writing the article breaking down the student survey data, I created several graphs to visualize some of the data trends. AI did not generate these images, they were all created by my hand. However, I did ask Claude for step-by-step instructions on how to execute specific commands in Excel. I could have taken a class on excel, watched YouTube tutorials or even tried to teach myself through trial and error. However, these resources would

# Turning Point USA has no place at Wabash College



Carson Wirtz '26

Reply to this opinion at  
cjwirtz26@wabash.edu

On Monday, March 23rd, stickers with the “Turning Point USA” brand were placed around our campus, promoting the White Replacement Theory. For those unfamiliar, this theory is a de-bunked, far-right, white nationalist conspiracy theory that claims Jews are trying to replace white Americans with nonwhite immigrants.

Now, according to a public email sent by Owen Miller '27, an executive for the prospective Turning Point USA chapter at Wabash, the message on these stickers, “does not reflect our values or mission.” Miller would go on to cite Turning Point’s mission statement, to be a space, a platform for civic engagement.

The question comes, however, of what Turning Point uses that platform for, and how do they civically engage? Well, the most noted person to speak and engage with the public with Turning Point was their founder, the late Charlie Kirk. We are all aware of Kirk’s career of hosting Turning Point debates for “civic and cultural engagement” and to “empower domestic conservative policy and engagement.” In other words, Turning Point, with Kirk, would host a platform to discuss and inform conservative policy.

Following Charlie Kirk’s death, the New York Times published the article, “Where Charlie Kirk Stood on Key Political Issues.” This article, by Ashley Ahn and Maxine Joselow, breaks down Kirk’s public political opinions, the “conservative policy” he supported and promoted with Turning Point. Ahn and Joselow report that Kirk was “a proponent of ‘replacement theory,’” and they smartly acknowledge, “that ideology motivated the gunman who killed 11 worshippers at a Pittsburgh synagogue in 2018.” We see here the policy and influence Turning Point has, and the outcomes from their dangerous rhetoric.

This is to say that Miller’s statement regarding the racist stickers we saw on our campus, is, at the very least, misleading. Turning Point USA does promote civic and cultural engagement and conservative policy, but that “conservative policy” includes their far-right White Replacement Theory, with the most public of their performers, Charlie Kirk, backing it on Turning Point’s stage. A Turning Point chapter at Wabash would be likely to host far-right speakers and events to spread this problematic,

hateful rhetoric around our community.

One thing I hope we can agree on is that white supremacy has no place at Wabash. Racism, xenophobia and antisemitism all have no place at Wabash. As Wabash men, we follow the Gentleman’s Rule. I believe that a gentleman, a responsible citizen, is not fueled by hate or prejudice. I believe we don’t provide a platform for hate or prejudice, as Turning Point USA does. Turning Point USA’s rhetoric is unequivocally anti-Gentleman’s Rule, and by extension, anti-Wabash.

Mind you, this is the same organization that claims to promote free speech and the First Amendment, whilst funding and running the “Professor Watchlist,” which is a disturbing online database that targets and archives college professors with “anti-American” ideologies. In other words, a public website that harasses professors for their political views. One example on this Watchlist is Wabash’s own Associate Professor of English Derek Mong, who was targeted by TPUSA for helping the student group, Wabash College Democrats, campaign in support of Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election against Donald Trump, whilst following Wabash’s protocols for such activities. Once again, I must ask if a gentleman and a responsible citizen would support professors, like Mong, being publicly harassed and put at risk for the crime of being progressive. I would certainly hope not, and I would hope we, as students, would support our professors just as they support us.

Speaking of the Wabash Democrats, this raises a question that I find to be the elephant in the room in discussions about a potential TPUSA chapter at Wabash: What about the Wabash Republicans? What about the Wabash Democrats? Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse (WDPD)? These established groups exist and have the capacity to provide space for discourse and debate. Admittedly, Wabash Republicans and Democrats have been relatively quiet as of late, but they can always make a return to form. Meanwhile, WDPD is very much what Wabash needs and does well, and that is to have structured, student-driven discussions and deliberations over social and political topics. With this all in mind, and the appearance that Wabash Republican executives are ceding their organization to instead associate with TPUSA, this all appears to be a move to score political points with our all-male, predominantly white, Gen-Z campus instead of supporting Wabash’s culture and community with discourse.

Turning Point does not belong at Wabash College. This is an organization that defies Wabash’s mission and values. I encourage students, student-leaders, and necessary faculty and staff, to do their part, raise your voice and preserve Wabash and the Gentleman’s Rule by rejecting a Turning Point USA chapter on our campus.

## Reflecting on Wabash in the age of AI

be time-consuming for me as a novice with little time and a relatively niche query. I was able to ask Claude in-depth questions that would not fit neatly into the Google search bar, as well as easily follow up on points that I was shaky on.

While AI today is far from perfectly reliable, it would be foolish to assume that this technology will not continue to improve and offer solutions to problems that have been practically unsolvable so far. To use an extreme and hopeful example, if AI-assisted research could find a cure for cancer, it would save millions of lives and mark an undeniable triumph for humanity. Even if we could eventually find that cure without AI, we must weigh the opportunity cost of lives lost in the meantime against the powerful efficiency offered by AI tools.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that relying on AI for everything will reduce, if not completely destroy our ability to think for ourselves. This risk is not hypothetical; research suggests that using AI measurably impairs our ability to make judgements and hold true beliefs. Common sense holds true here: the quickest and easiest solution is rarely the best one. Humans perform best when they are well-rounded and intellectually independent, and this can only be achieved through meaningful struggle. This is essentially the value proposition of the liberal arts: you may not learn the hard skills of a trade or profession, but your mind will be strong and adaptable enough to tackle any kind of problem life throws at you.

Thus, the liberal arts are uniquely equipped to survive in an AI economy. One strength of AI that I repeatedly hear is its ability to make connections between concepts during research. However, I find this to be one area where AI is no substitute for a quality education. At Wabash at least, students will often connect ideas from one course to classes they took in entirely different disciplines, relating scientific principles to ethics derived from the humanities for example. AI is not yet equipped to think so broadly, often remaining confined to the parameters of a given prompt. Here, humans may actually benefit from being finite creatures with limited knowledge, in that we don’t suffer from a crippling information overload. AI may have access to an unfathomably large body of information, but there is no guarantee that it will draw the same novel connection that a well-rounded, curious and liberally educated human might. Truth is not found in averages, and productive dialogue will always be better served by diverse, invested voices holding sincere beliefs rather than one AI model suggesting possibilities as a neutral observer.

Furthermore, we have lived real life. We can actually make decisions. We possess real memories and experiences that inform us how to treat

others. Think of a time where you’ve needed to give a friend tough love or say a hard truth, then contrast that to the hollow yes-man persona of modern chatbots. As of 2026, AI has not yet achieved meaningful sentience or agency, and still responds within the boundaries set by the human prompter. AI tools may appear to act in your best interests, but I doubt that this will ever truly be the case when they are designed and owned by billion-dollar tech conglomerates.

AI cannot and should not make decisions, in part because it cannot be held accountable in the same way that humans can. Everyone, from doctors and politicians to your local plumber, all owe an ethical obligation to those they serve. The fact that professionals can personally face consequences for negligence and abuse allows us to place trust in them, more so than if consumer backlash fell on a faceless tech company. This trust not only benefits the individual, it helps glue society together.

For these reasons, I maintain that a Wabash degree will still hold value, even if AI radically changes the economy that Wabash graduates must enter. However, the College must navigate uncharted territory, and find the golden mean between rejecting AI outright and surrendering to the singularity. Crucially however, any successful path forward must prepare students for the realities of the AI age. Wabash would do students a disservice if the policy was simply burying their heads in the sand and pretending such a powerful tool doesn’t exist.

Tools can be used for good or for ill, and the importance of learning how to use them responsibly only increases with their power. Wabash can navigate this difficult path by staying true to its mission. I would argue that we will best teach men how to act responsibly and live humanely by shaping a healthy relationship between students and the tools that are bound to shape their future.

Furthermore, it may be true both that engaging with AI is harmful to intellectual development and that it will be necessary to prepare students for the workforce. Any emerging technology that brings something new to humanity necessarily takes something away. In exchange for mass-produced goods, traditional handicrafts are now the stuff of history museums and boutique designers. In exchange for the typewriter, good handwriting became an aesthetic rather than a profitable skill. Even now, digital word processors and automatic spell-check ease the cognitive load of typing, as opposed to prior technology that was less forgiving of error. Crafting goods by hand and clean handwriting are both intrinsically valuable, but clearly not essential to the human experience. My point here is that we can’t adopt new technologies, especially revolutionary ones, without pay-

# HI-FIVES

## FIVE THINGS WORTHY OF A HI-FIVE THIS WEEK

### CAN’T WAIT TO GET A MOUTHFUL

*Lo-Five to Wally’s Waffles for their mysterious advertisement by email. Guerilla marketing might be all the rage, but it might be helpful to tell your customers where/why/how/when you can actually buy the product...*

### ARMLESS AND DANGEROUS

*Lo-Five to the quadruple amputee pro cornhole player that arrested for murder after shooting his passenger. We are all wondering the same question: which nub?*

### JUMPING THROUGH HOOPS

*Hi-Five to the NBA for taking bids for expansion franchises in Seattle and Las Vegas. We can all agree Seattle should get the SuperSonics back, but maybe Vegas isn’t the best idea if the NBA is trying to get this gambling thing under control...*

### A SMASHING GOOD TIME!

*Hi-Five to the Super Smash Bros club for creating buzz for their new event. If there’s one thing Wabash guys love, it’s a good Smash!*

### RUB ONE OUT FOR A REAL ONE

*Lo-Five to the death of OnlyFans CEO and smut pioneer Leon Radvinsky. Rumor has it that Bonnie Blue will be attempting her new world record in the casket...*

ing some kind of price.

While Wabash has an obligation to preserve humanity in the liberal arts, it must also preserve its own existence. Wabash could ban AI entirely, but there could come a point where it no longer becomes pragmatic to do so. The humanistic benefits gained by resisting AI might eventually be outweighed by the sheer difficulty of operating without modern tools.

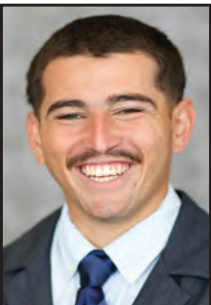
Ultimately, it is not the purview of the faculty to balance the budget and plan for the College’s financial future. Conversely, any sincere argument about how best to educate cannot start and end at the bottom line. However, there is real tension between the ethical responsibility of the College to shape young men and the imperative to preserve the College so that it can continue to do so in the future.

It may be reductive to say that Wabash doesn’t have a choice when it comes to embracing AI. Wabash has faced existential questions and made difficult choices before: most notably by remaining an all-male institution. In doing so, the College cut against the grain of higher education, where coed is now the norm. In this sense, Wabash could decide to reject AI altogether. However, we may also ask ourselves if Wabash is already contrarian enough without rejecting the integration of AI as well as that of women.

We might gain some insight into AI’s future at Wabash by looking at how the College has navigated technological change in the past. In the 1980s, there were also split views on how computers could influence the College for better or for worse. Even those voices that advocated for computer literacy did not believe that there would ever be a computer science major, holding that such a specialized program would be antithetical to the liberal arts. In the 21st century, no one bats an eye at Wabash having both a computer science major and a strong liberal arts foundation.

Eventually, there will come a day where no one on campus remembers a world before AI. I predict that AI will become more normalized at Wabash as time passes, perhaps for worse but hopefully for the best. Remember that Wabash has grappled with other seismic technological changes before. While the industrial revolution, the personal computer and the internet don’t neatly map onto the unprecedented birth of AI, we can take comfort in the fact that each of these inventions was once unthinkable to those that watched it change the world. Through it all, humanity has persisted and so has human-oriented education, even if it has changed. For as much concern as I have about AI, I remain optimistic for humanity’s capacity to adapt to even the most grim circumstances.

# Wabash is not the place to have free time



**Antonio Grandinetti '28**  
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There seems to be a growing trend of people on campus sharing the feeling of being overwhelmed with activities. Everybody knows that Wabash is not easy and that academics are the priority, but it is also important to recognize that many students come here to play a sport. That is not a small commitment. For most, it is supposed to be a four-year process, something they chose when they decided to represent the scarlet and white.

At the same time, that reality does not always match what actually happens. Looking at one example, only 20 seniors on the football team played all four years, while 51 players made up the roster this past season. That number alone raises an important point. It

is not necessarily about blaming individuals, but about understanding what that drop-off represents. Whether it is the difficulty of balancing academics, athletics and campus life, or the change in role from being a standout athlete in high school to competing for time in college, something shifts. This is one example of where there is space to reflect and improve.

The objective of this article is not to criticize, but to highlight that Wabash athletics is a vital part of the Wabash experience. Managing the burden of being a student-athlete is demanding, but it is also part of what students sign up for when they come here. Wabash, by nature, is meant to be challenging. As an all-male institution, one of only two in the country, the environment is structured in a way that pushes students to grow through difficulty. That includes continuing to show up even when the experience is different from what it once was. Not everyone will be the star they were back home, but that does not remove the value of the commitment. In many ways, it reinforces it.

“The people who quit are an important

measure to track as this is a standard to maintain,” said Director of Athletics and Recreation Jim Peeples.

He pointed to the size of incoming classes, noting 181 freshmen for the class of ’29 were athletes, and explained that recruiting at Wabash involves more than just athletics.

“First, the coaches here excel at selling Wabash academics, helping them with what they can, leading them to their future careers,” said Peeples. “Second, coaches are good at selling the social part of Wabash, without withholding the reality of the opportunities in Montgomery County and the life on campus, fraternities and independent housing.”

At the same time, Peeples acknowledged that there needs to be honesty about the transition. “There needs to be a straight talk about how hard it is to be a Wabash freshman,” said Peeples.

There is also another layer to this conversation, and it has to do with time. Wabash has limited opportunities for free time by design. Between academics, athletics and involvement in clubs or campus organizations,

schedules fill up quickly. While this can contribute to the feeling of being overwhelmed, it also creates structure. The more engaged students are, the fewer opportunities there are for negative habits to develop. In that sense, the lack of free time is not necessarily a flaw, but part of the system that defines the Wabash experience.

Wabash is not meant to be comfortable or easy. It is a place where students are expected to balance multiple responsibilities, follow through on commitments, and grow through challenges. Athletics is one of the clearest examples of this. While not everyone will stay for all four years, the expectation and the opportunity remain the same. In the end, the question is not whether Wabash should be easier, but whether students are willing to embrace what they originally came here to do.

## When conflict feels close to home



**Chayce Howell '27**  
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**The Bachelor**, in partnership with **Wabash Democracy and Public Discourse**, launched this recurring column to reflect how students are thinking about campus life, current events and the broader world. Each week, a small group of randomly selected Wabash students gathers for a facilitated conversation. Participants are not quoted by name. That choice allows space for honest reflection without fear of judgment. Rather than offering conclusions or arguments, the column captures how students are making sense of complex issues in real time.

Recent escalation in the Iran conflict has pushed international politics back into everyday conversation, raising questions among students about why the United States becomes involved in conflicts abroad and what those decisions mean at home.

Some participants pointed to Iran’s nuclear development as a central cause. Others emphasized the United States’ relationship with Israel. “We are getting involved on behalf of Israel,” one participant said, while another questioned that involvement more directly. “I don’t see the point of the United States to be a part of it.”

At the same time, students expressed uncertainty about the full picture. “There are multiple factors but that is for debate,” one participant said, reflecting a broader sense that the causes of the conflict are difficult to pin down. Several participants suggested that economic interests, particularly access to oil and other resources, could play a role in shaping U.S. foreign policy. Others raised the possibility that international conflict can draw attention away from domestic issues.

“Some of the things I’ve heard, some of it is distractions,” one student said. “It seems every time something has happened like Venezuela, it has been a distraction from the Epstein files.”

That uncertainty carried into a broader discussion of patterns in U.S. foreign policy. Students described what they saw as a recurring cycle of involvement.

“For me, it has always been about control,” one participant said. “It has always been about power and the USA taking control.”

Others echoed that sentiment, pointing to past conflicts as evidence of a larger trend. “We always want more; the U.S. sees the opportunity to take more control of other countries,” one student said. “There is always a cycle.”

Participants did not all agree on the causes of that cycle, but many shared the

view that the United States often becomes involved in conflicts where its role is not clearly defined. “We don’t need to be a part of it,” one student said.

That perspective led to questions about whether and when the United States should step back. Some students argued that resolving the conflict would require direct negotiation between the countries involved. “Actual peace talks where they come to the table and talk stuff out,” one participant said.

Alongside questions about foreign policy, students turned their attention inward, focusing on the role of U.S. leadership and political systems.

Participants expressed a broad sense that responsibility is widely shared, with blame extending across government leaders, Congress and the political system as a whole. Many felt that partisan divisions and fear of political consequences prevent meaningful accountability, while others emphasized that citizens themselves contribute to the problem by remaining entrenched in their views. Frustration also centered on unfulfilled campaign promises, particularly around avoiding new wars, reinforcing a perception that both leaders and the public are complicit in outcomes that leave many feeling disillusioned.

For many students, the impact of the conflict felt less abstract than it might appear at first glance.

Economic concerns came up quickly. Rising gas prices were one of the most immediate effects students noticed. “I saw the price of gas spike up 35 cents in one day,” one participant said.

Others pointed to broader costs. Participants discussed how increases in fuel prices could affect groceries, transportation and everyday expenses. Several students emphasized that these impacts are felt most directly by ordinary people rather than policymakers.

“We are hurting ourselves,” one participant said. “Look at the gas prices increasing. We are shooting ourselves in the foot.” Beyond economic effects, students expressed concern about how the conflict could deepen political division at home. Some suggested that continued involvement abroad may reinforce existing divides and push people further into echo chambers.

“This war is dividing our country even further,” one participant said.

Others described a sense of fatigue with the pace of news and the way attention shifts from one issue to another. “Each time something happens, we learn a lot about it, and then we forget about it,” one student said, referencing previous topics that briefly dominated public conversation before fading.

Some participants expressed hope for diplomatic solutions. Others questioned whether meaningful change is likely under current conditions. Across those perspectives, one theme remained consistent. People are trying to make sense of a situation that feels both distant and immediate at the same time.

## Wallies in the wild: Don’t be bashful



**Jacob Weber '25**  
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One of the first things I was told when I started at the firm I work for came in the form of a three word slogan: “Don’t be bashful.” Full disclosure, I couldn’t even tell you what “bashful” meant when I first heard that phrase; my brain was working on overdrive as I worried too much about trying to make a good first impression on my coworkers and higher-ups. After retreating to the relative safety of my desk, I racked my brain for what “bashful” meant. We’ve all heard it before, and I knew what it meant in theory, but something still felt off. So, after a quick google search, I was confident the advice essentially meant, “Don’t be overly sensitive, modest or shy.”

It felt like such an obvious piece of advice that I quickly allowed myself to forget what was said and ignore the real purpose behind it. After all, we’re the generation of LinkedIn posts that are the exact opposite of bashful. Growing up in the age of technology and social media, we certainly aren’t sensitive, modest or shy about our lives. And having gone to Wabash, I knew exactly what it was like to not be bashful. During our freshman year, each of us learns a few quick lessons that shape our time as a student. If we have a question in class, we ask it. If we see someone new at TGIF, we go introduce ourselves. When we have moments of failure, we take responsibility and attack them head on like true gentlemen.

Fresh out from being on campus as a student, I thought I had everything I needed to be ready. Boy, I was wrong. Very quickly I retreated back to bashfulness in a new environment, surrounded by new faces and

being the youngest in the office by a long shot. When acronyms were thrown around in meetings, I nodded along like I knew what they meant instead of asking for an explanation. When I had an idea worth sharing with the group, I kept it to myself because it wasn’t ready yet. At events, I hardly spoke to anyone outside of those I was introduced to or who spoke to me first.

That bashfulness caught up quick. Not asking questions meant I was out of the loop on projects and couldn’t effectively help the team as much as I could. Keeping ideas to myself made it seem like I wasn’t paying attention or doing research on the issues we were tackling. Being shy at events meant I wasn’t able to expand my network or meet people from the firm I didn’t directly work with.

But like any good advice, those three words were repeated over and over again until I couldn’t ignore it. Instead of letting that advice come in one ear and go out the other, I critically self-reflecting and realized just how bashful I had let myself become. And once I realized how that was impacting my work, the only logical next step was to fix it. So I started to ask questions, speak up in meetings and engage with others. Since that epiphany, I have not only increased my self-confidence in my work, but it has allowed those around me to have more confidence in me as well. It took some time, but I can’t tell you how many times those words have echoed in my head since it finally clicked.

With just a few weeks left in this year at Wabash, do your best to reflect on what this environment is like. If you find yourself being bashful, take the steps to avoid it if you can. If you’ve got it “figured out,” make a mental note of what it feels like. Then, as you transition to summer internships, graduate school or the workforce, emulate the best parts of the Wabash culture in your new surroundings. Ask questions if you have them, speak up when you need to and engage with those around you. And most importantly, “Don’t be bashful.”

## An opportunity to give back: New student orientation



**Landon Huber '27**  
Reply to this opinion at [ljhuber27@wabash.edu](mailto:ljhuber27@wabash.edu)

As the Day of Giving approaches on April 29th, I know many of my peers along with myself want to give back to the College, but I don’t have the financial means to do so in the way the Day of Giving focuses on. I want to offer an opportunity to give back to the College and assist our first-year students throughout orientation. As mentors we have the opportunity to shape these new Wabash men. In addition to supporting these students during their first experi-

ences at Wabash, we get to give back to our community through a community service project. As mentors we get to expose these first-year students to the Wabash culture and show them how we apply the Gentlemen’s Rule to different situations. If answering questions, guiding students to different locations on campus and being a resource for new students sounds intriguing to you, I urge you to apply to be a New Student Orientation Mentor for next fall. This act of philanthropy is one of the biggest assets the College can have. We are the College; we are the student body, and it is our job to build the culture that we want to see. It starts with our first interactions with our first-year students. If you have any questions about this opportunity, please don’t hesitate to reach out to myself ([ljhuber27@wabash.edu](mailto:ljhuber27@wabash.edu)) or Ryan Bartley ([rwbartle28@wabash.edu](mailto:rwbartle28@wabash.edu)). The application closes on 4/7/2026 at noon.



COURTESY OF LANDON HUBER '27

This past year’s new student orientation mentors pose at the Allen Center.

Request for longer opinions

Have an opinion on campus culture or a hot take to share, but have a lot to say? Write an opinion piece!

If interested, contact [ecbone26@wabash.edu](mailto:ecbone26@wabash.edu)

# Baseball struggles against No. 21 Adrian and Anderson, continues losing streak

**JERRION ROSE '29**  
STAFF WRITER

The Wabash baseball team has continued to have a hard time, going 0-4 in the last week. On Wednesday, March 25, the team traveled to take on the Ravens of Anderson College. Although the Little Giants held their own at the plate, the team came up short, losing 5-8.

In the first inning, Anderson jumped out to a three-run lead courtesy of a bases-loaded double.

Wabash clawed its way back in the third inning due to the poor pitching from the Ravens. After a run was brought in thanks to a Ben Henke '26 walk, a wild pitch allowed another runner to score before Will McKinzie '26 hit a sacrifice fly to center field to tie the game at 3-3.

By the sixth inning, Anderson regained a three-run lead, but Wabash inched its way back in during the top of the seventh frame. Caleb Ellspermann '27 doubled to open the

frame, and Will Fremion '27 brought his teammate home with a single to right center field. Carson Vlan '27 contributed a sacrifice fly that brought in another run to cut the deficit to just one run.

The Ravens solidified their win in the bottom of the eighth inning by bringing in two runners rather easily due to two Wabash errors putting the runners in scoring position. Wabash was unable to make a last-inning charge and ultimately came up short.

Over the weekend, Wabash took on a formidable opponent, No. 21 Adrian College, three times at Loeb Stadium in Lafayette, Indiana. A doubleheader was played on Saturday, and the last game was played on Sunday afternoon.

Adrian came out swinging in the first game, scoring 4 runs in the first inning off of starting pitcher Caleb Everson '26. He then held the Bulldogs scoreless over the next three innings before Head Baseball Coach Jake Martin '03 made a pitching change, bringing in Jackson Woehr '26.

In the bottom of the fourth inning, Ellspermann and DJ Mendez '28 both hit singles and advanced closer to home plate courtesy of a couple of Adrian errors. Adrian's pitcher

walked Will Wallace '28 with the bases loaded, bringing Ellspermann in to score Wabash's first run. Shortly after, Bradley Gilliam '27 hit a sacrifice fly to bring home Mendez for a second run, cutting the deficit to two runs.

The Little Giants, however, were unable to ride the wave of momentum from the fourth inning, and Adrian took the first game by a final score of 5-2.

In the second leg of the doubleheader, Adrian strike once again in the opening inning. A throwing error by Wabash created the opportunity for one run to score for the Bulldogs. The Little Giants fought back in the bottom of the third inning, though, scoring a run off of a throwing error caused by a sacrifice bunt by Jacob Edwards '27 to tie the game at 1-1.

Despite Wabash's effort, Adrian took over in the fourth inning. A couple of singles and a couple of Wabash errors allowed the Bulldogs to score five runs, giving them a substantial 6-1 halfway through the game.

Gilliam cut into Adrian's lead in the bottom of the fifth inning with a triple to left-center field, driving in

two runs to cut the deficit to three. The Bulldogs, however, closed out the game by scoring a run in both the eighth and ninth innings, giving them a 8-3 win.

On Sunday, Adrian picked up right where they left off after the Saturday doubleheader, scoring three runs in the first frame. In the bottom of the third inning, Wabash emerged with Jimmy Hawksworth '28, Fremion and Ellspermann loading the bases. Landen Basey '29 hit a two-run single to left field, decreasing the Adrian lead to just one run. The Little Giants would keep the score at 2-3 until the final three innings where the Bulldogs scored a run in each frame to secure a 6-2 win and sweep over Wabash.

"Adrian is another top 25 team," says Everson, "I think we knew it was going to be a challenge, but we were excited for that. I think there were just a few moments in each game where we messed up, and that's what eventually led to the losses."

Wabash will open up North Coast Athletic Conference play on Saturday, March 28, as they will play John Carroll University in a doubleheader in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Game times are set for 12:00 p.m. EST and 3:30 p.m. EST.



PHOTO BY JEREMIAH RUNGE '29

**Landen Basey '29 swings at a pitch in a game against Adrian College on March 21, 2026, at Loeb Stadium in Lafayette, Indiana.**

## Wabash football welcomes former NFL quarterback, Ken Karcher, as new offensive coordinator

**CARTER MCCALL '29**  
STAFF WRITER

Wabash has added a seasoned and accomplished voice to its football program, announcing the hiring of Ken Karcher as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for the upcoming season. With more than 30 years of coaching experience spanning high school, collegiate and professional football, Karcher arrives in Crawfordsville with a reputation for building offenses and developing quarterbacks at every level.

A former quarterback himself, Karcher played collegiately at the University of Notre Dame and Tulane University before earning opportunities in the NFL with the Denver Broncos, Kansas City Chiefs and New Orleans Saints. His playing career included participation in Super Bowl XXII as a member of the Broncos.

"I am excited to build off of the great tradition of Wabash football," said Karcher. "I am confident I can help the program take the next step towards the goal of winning a championship."

**"I am excited to be a part of Coach Gilbert's mission and vision for Wabash football. I can't wait to work with this unique group of scholar athletes."**

- Offensive Coordinator and Quarterbacks Coach Ken Karcher

Michigan University from 2009 to 2012 and the University of Pittsburgh from 1993 to 1996. At both programs, Karcher focused on quarterback development and offensive strategy. Additional collegiate coaching roles include positions at the University of Toledo, the University of North Texas and Idaho State University, where he worked with quarterbacks and receivers.

Karcher also boasts an extensive professional coaching background. He served as offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach for the Rhein Fire of NFL Europe from 1997 to 2000, helping lead the team to a World Bowl Championship in 1998. Prior to that coaching stint, he coordinated the offense for the Orlando Thunder in 1992, guiding the team to a league championship and a World Bowl Finals appearance.

"I really like the offensive coordinator to be tethered to the performance of the quarterback," said Head Football Coach Jake Gilbert '98. "Those two have to be aligned and the performance of one determines the performance of the other typically."

Beyond football, Karcher is the founder and executive director of The WIN Awakening, a non-profit sports ministry organization focused on faith-based leadership development for athletes and coaches.

"We are very excited about Coach Karcher's leadership and experience," said Gilbert. "He coaches the heart of

our players and has vast experience leading staffs and offenses. His offensive style will help us take the next step."

Karcher holds two graduate degrees in theology and counseling, complementing his bachelor's degree from Tulane. His diverse background in leadership, player development and program building is expected to bring both experience and stability to Wabash's offense as the team prepares for the upcoming season

"I am excited to be a part of Coach Gilbert's mission and vision for Wabash football," said Karcher. "I can't wait to work with this unique group of scholar athletes."



COURTESY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

**Karcher takes over a Wabash offense that produced 2,702 passing yards, 1,404 rushing yards and 206 first downs in the 2025 season.**



COURTESY OF ALCHETRON

**Ken Karcher gets tackled by a player from the Los Angeles Raiders.**

## This week in sports

**CARTER MCCALL '29**  
STAFF WRITER

This past week was a busy and productive one for Wabash athletics, with strong performances across tennis, volleyball, track and field and lacrosse, highlighting a stretch of competition that showcased the Little Giants' depth and resilience.

**Tennis**

The tennis team delivered one of the most tightly contested results of the week, earning a 4-3 victory over Ohio Northern University. The pair of Augusto Ghidini '26 and Rafael Rin '27 led the way with a 6-4 win at number one doubles and the duo of Murilo Guarniari '28 and Edmon Neto '29 matched that score at number two doubles to give Wabash the early 1-0 lead in the match.

In singles play, Wabash proved to be decisive. Guarniari and Ghidini each recorded key straight-set victories, and Ghidini rallied from a first-set tiebreak to dominate the second set. Additional wins from Tharakesh Ashokar '26 and Neto clinched the match before the final contest concluded, giving Wabash a strong return from spring break.

With the win, the Little Giants improved to 8-8 on the season. The team will have their hands full this weekend with matches against Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, Principia College and Washington University (St. Louis) on Saturday, March 28. They will also kick off North Coast Athletic Conference

(NCAC) play on Sunday, March 29, against Wittenberg University in Springfield, Ohio.

**Volleyball**

The volleyball squad continued its upward momentum with a pair of impressive victories over Franklin College and Spalding University.

On Friday, March 20, the Little Giants traveled down to Franklin College and took care of business quickly with a 3-0 victory, completing a season sweep of the Grizzlies.

Bawibawi Thang '27 led the offensive effort with 18 kills, and Jaden Greenwell '29 delivered one of the most efficient outings of the season, recording 10 kills on 11 swings without an error.

Wabash followed that performance up with a dramatic five-set road win over Spalding University in Midwest Collegiate Volleyball League (MCVL) play. After dropping the opening set, Wabash rallied to take a 2-1 lead before Spalding forced a fifth set. In a match featuring 22 ties and constant momentum swings, Wabash pulled away late in the fifth set to win the tiebreaking set 15-11.

Thang led the way again with 16 kills and 11 digs while Shad Wilson '27 added 15 kills. Matthew Stittle '28 recorded 52 assists and four service aces, and libero Piotr Wolan '28 anchored the defense with 16 digs. The win moved Wabash to 4-1 in MCVL play, keeping the Little Giants firmly in the race near the top of the

conference standings.

The team will finish out their season with a string of four consecutive MCVL matches. On Friday, March 27, Wabash will take on Calvin University at Chadwick Court at 7 p.m. EST, and on Saturday, March 28, the Little Giants will play Trine University at Chadwick Court at 1 p.m. EST.

**Track and Field**

The track and field team opened its outdoor season at the Rose-Hulman Early Bird Meet with a third-place finish out of eight teams, totaling 105.5 points. Host Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology claimed the team title, and DePauw University finished second.

Wabash posted 14 top-eight finishes, highlighted by Colson Mendenhall's '29 runner-up efforts in both the long jump and pole vault. Kannon Chase '26 added a second-place finish in the high jump and a fourth-place finish in the long jump. The throwing group delivered a strong performance, showcasing depth with multiple top-five finishes in the hammer throw and shot put.

On the track, Tyler Kerzee '29 and Sawyer Lewis '28 each recorded fourth-place finishes in the 1,500-meter and 800-meter runs, contributing to a balanced team performance across events.

With a promising start to the outdoor season, the Little Giants aim to carry that momentum down to Atlanta, Georgia, where they will compete in the Emory University

Thrills in the Hills meet on Friday, March 27, and Saturday, March 28.

**Lacrosse**

The lacrosse team traveled to University Heights, Ohio on Saturday, March 21, to take on John Carroll University in the team's first NCAC matchup of the season.

The Blue Streaks took an early three-goal lead before the Little Giants tied it up later in the first period thanks to a goal from Will Sorg '27 and two goals from Jake Phippen '26. In the second and third periods, however, Wabash could not handle John Carroll's offensive efficiency as the home team jumped out to a 13-5 lead. Despite a late surge by Wabash, John Carroll's lead proved to be too much to overcome. Phippen led the

Little Giants with three goals on five shots while Evan Bair '28 and Sorg also tallied two goals each.

Wabash returned to Fischer Field on Wednesday, March 25, where the team took on Illinois Wesleyan University. In the first period, there was very little scoring, but the Titans held a slight 2-1 lead. During the second period, however, Illinois Wesleyan opened up their lead to 7-3 and went into halftime with the momentum. The Titans did not slow down in the second half, and they ultimately won the game 17-6.

Wabash will have a week off before their next game against rival DePauw University on Saturday, April 4, at Fischer Field at 1 p.m. EST.



PHOTO BY WILL DUNCAN '27

**Sam Santiago '26 drives through the defense in a game against Illinois Wesleyan on March 25, 2026, at Fischer Field.**

# From the blocks to the podium: West '28 touches the wall as an All-American

TY MURPHY '27  
STAFF WRITER

The Wabash swimming and diving team added another milestone into their history books at the conclusion of the NCAA Division III National Championship. A tough and hard-fought season ended with Ryan West '28 taking home All-American honors in the 200-yard backstroke.

For the first time in almost a decade, the program not only sent a competitor to the national championship but also brought him home as a first team All-American. The last time a member of the team achieved this honor in the pool was in 2016 by Zechariah Banks '16, but in 2020, Hunter Jones '20 and Jan Dziadek '21 were honored as All-Americans by the College Swimming and Diving Coaches Association of America due to the national championship being canceled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It means a great deal for our program to have an All-American," said Head Swimming and Diving Coach William Bernhardt. "To go ten years without someone swimming in the championship is a really long time and it is fantastic that we were able to get there again."

West secured his spot in the "A" final thanks to a standout performance in Saturday morning's preliminary heats, where he touched



COURTESY OF NORTH COAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

**Ryan West '28 gives a fist pump after finishing the preliminary heat of the 200-yard backstroke at the DIII National Championship on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the IU Natatorium at IU Indianapolis.**

the wall in a time of 1:46.06. This broke his own school record of 1:46.42 set earlier in the year at the North Coast Athletic Conference (NCAC) Championships. He entered the national meet seeded 11th thanks to this time but quickly ex-

ceeded expectations and advanced into the top eight.

In the evening final, West posted a time of 1:46.97, finishing eighth overall. It became not only the moment he officially earned his All-American status but also the moment he witnessed the culmination of his effort.

"Ryan put a lot of hard work and dedication into just getting to the National Championship," said Bernhardt. "To get to the 'A' final and earn a trophy in his first championship is validation for all the time and effort that goes into his training that no one sees or hears about. He wanted this ever since he just missed out on making the national championship meet last year. It was so special to see his growth over the last year."

But it was not all smooth sailing to get to this result. After just missing his own school record and the finals in the 100-yard backstroke with a time of 49.85, he could have

let the intensity of the meet get to him. But West was no stranger to the nerves and anxiety that encompass such a large meet.

"I was stunned by the size of the pool, the number of people on and off the pool deck and the intensity of the meet," said West. "I was a little shell-shocked, but my coaches helped talk me up and realize that I deserved to be at the meet."

Being able to lean on his coaches made him realize that he was meant to be there, but what really made him realize he could compete was his supportive teammates who made the drive to come cheer him on.

"Having my team there was super supportive," said West. "They reassured me that I was going to do super well and that I couldn't do anything wrong to disappoint them."

And in typical Wabash fashion, the Little Giants made sure they were the loudest ones there, so

their teammate knew he had the support behind him.

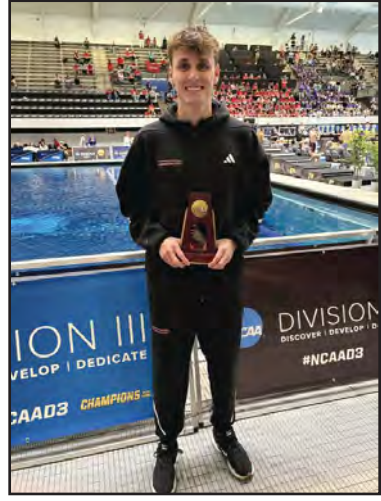
"My parents told me the other teams were coming up and complimenting our team on the energy they brought on Saturday, which just shows that our team culture is something that no other team has and we should cherish it," said West.

This performance did more than just demonstrate the culture of swimming and diving; it gave the team something to aspire to.

"This is going to help motivate and push our current team members to attain this level as well as push future Little Giants to get to this level," said Bernhardt.

West's All-American performance caps off his historic sophomore season as well as the team's. As the Little Giants look ahead to what is coming, they can use this as both a benchmark and a catalyst. It is the signal of a renewed momentum for a program aiming to establish itself within the NCAA's top Division III swimming and diving teams.

"Onward and upward from here," said Bernhardt.



COURTESY OF HEAD SWIMMING AND DIVING COACH WILLIAM BERNHARDT

**Ryan West '28 poses with his NCAA All-American trophy the DIII National Championship on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the IU Natatorium at IU Indianapolis.**



COURTESY OF NORTH COAST ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

**Head Swimming and Diving Coach William Bernhardt and Ryan West '28 react to West's time in the 'A' final in the 200-yard backstroke at the DIII National Championship on Saturday, March 21, 2026, at the IU Natatorium at IU Indianapolis.**

## The legs feed the wolf: Cole Shifferly '26

SEAN BLEDSOE '26  
SPORTS EDITOR

Growing up in the Fort Wayne, Indiana area with parents who played recreational tennis, Cole Shifferly '26 grew up with a tennis racket in his hands. Originally, however, the sport was more casual than competitive for the biology major and chemistry minor.

Around the age of 10, he participated in "junior team tennis," which is where you get a group of friends and compete in matches against another group of kids from your area. Shifferly enjoyed the recreational side of the sport until he played a match against a rather annoying opponent when he was 11. During that match, Shifferly called a ball out that his opponent thought was in, and from that point forward, his opponent made some intentionally incorrect calls out of spite. At the end of the match, Shifferly expressed his frustrations to his mom, but she replied with an eye-opening

response.

"My mom said, 'You have to be good enough to the point where if they cheat you, you can still win,'" said Shifferly.

From that point on, Shifferly's mindset about the sport shifted. He never wanted to lose to someone like that ever again. Little did that player know how much of an impact he had on Shifferly's career.

"That moment, for me, was the turning point where I went from enjoying the sport to wanting to be good at the sport as quickly as possible," said Shifferly.

As his high school years approached, his level of play continued to rise thanks to the local talent in the Fort Wayne area pushing him to become a better player. It was this high level of competition that pushed Shifferly forward into the state finals during his freshman year.

Ethan Koeneman '26 has known Shifferly since the two of them were



PHOTO BY ELIJAH GREENE '25

**Cole Shifferly '26 aggressively plays up at the net in a doubles match against DePauw University on April 16, 2025, at Crawfordsville High School in Crawfordsville, Indiana.**

10 years old, and the pair had their fair share of matches growing up.

"The first thing I noticed was an unathletic kid, but I also noticed someone who was a perfectionist and who wanted to be as good as he could be," said Koeneman. "I knew he would be really good at keeping up with the big dogs in Fort Wayne tennis."

As he was nearing the end of his high school career, however, he wasn't sure if he wanted to pursue collegiate tennis or not. When he visited Wabash, he was nearly sold on the spot.

"Coach Bickett was a great salesman," said Shifferly. "Everyone that I met spoke incredibly highly of the support system that comes from being here as well as the academics. From my point of view, if I'm going to come out and spend four years here, I'm not going to spend that time twiddling my thumbs. I'm going to get something out of it."

Since his freshman year, Shifferly has made a name for himself being an integral part of both singles and doubles play, which is quite impressive considering the fact that singles and doubles tennis are almost entirely different sports. Regardless of the format of play, however, Shifferly still brings a hungry energy to the court.

"At the end of the day, I would not say I'm the most talented guy out there, but I would say my talent is getting out there and playing tough," said

Shifferly. "That's how I win matches. I'm not the biggest hitter. I don't have the biggest serve. I don't have the greatest hands. My best thing is that I counter really well."

**"I'd like to be remembered as somebody who was a big competitor and someone who was going to go out there, no matter the circumstances, and find a way."**

- Cole Shifferly '26

In tennis, a counterpuncher is a player that is a defensive specialist that can withstand powerful attacks from their opponents through their consistency, endurance and mental toughness. Shifferly is the embodiment of this play style, and he knows that it wears down his opponents.

"I'm going to rip them apart with my legs," said Shifferly. "The legs feed the wolf."

On top of his athleticism, Shifferly also prides himself on bringing the energy for him and his team. Tennis, like many other sports, is a game of momentum. The more energy you can create for yourself and your team, the more likely you are to have an upper hand.

"I'd like to say that I go out there and try to charge the courts up and find some energy for the guys beside me," said Shifferly. "I always tell my guys when we go out there, 'Hey! You're going to hear from me.'"

If you were to attend a Wabash tennis match, you would see just that. Between points, Shifferly constantly surveys the adjacent courts, looks for his fellow teammates and chants with them to boost morale. Some people may see it as obnoxious noise, but for the guys competing in scarlet and white, it's what they need to help them win a tight match.

"He has matured a lot," said Koeneman. "Coming into Wabash, he was more quiet and let his play do the talking. You knew he was the best player on campus from day one, but then he grew into a more vocal leader as well. People listen and respect him for his game, work ethic on and off the court and his voice by calling us out and making sure we are meeting the standard."

There's no doubt that Shifferly has been a centerpiece of the program's trend in improvement, and he hopes that his four years of contribution can set a standard as for what the team can be like in the future.

"I'd like to be remembered as somebody who was a big competitor and someone who was going to go out there, no matter the circumstances, and find a way," said Shifferly.



PHOTO BY SEAN BLEDSOE '26

**Cole Shifferly '26 winds up to hit a forehand in warmups before a match against DePauw University on April 16, 2025, at Crawfordsville High School in Crawfordsville, Indiana.**