



StudentPrints

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Mock Trial *Alessia Coluccio*

In late February, Dominican Academy's Mock Trial Team competed at the New York County Criminal Court against Democracy Prep Charter High School in the annual New York State Mock Trial Tournament.

The New York State High School Mock Trial Tournament is a popular competition where students receive legal experience. Based on readiness and presentation, they gather points in the hope of moving on into the competition. The competition starts off at a regional level, and as teams advance, schools from different areas of the state compete against each other.

The purpose of this competition is to give students interested in law a first-hand

feel of courtroom procedures. In addition to this, those who participate learn the basic skills of professionalism, public speaking, reasoning, and communication. This program overall gives a basic introduction to the legal profession.

This year's case is called United States vs. Phoenix Jones. It is a criminal case involving both cyber and property crimes. The side of the prosecution consists of Morgan Thornberry, the detective who had undergone the investigation of the convicted Phoenix Jones (Alessia Coluccio); Cameron Clark, the pawn shop clerk supposedly selling illegal goods (Georgia Cropper); and Jules Thompson, an expert on cyber currency

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From left V. Kolacz, K. Fernandez, S. Smith, A. Coluccio, G. Cropper, N. Bely

Educated

Damaris Lindsay

The DA Book Club chose *Educated*, a memoir by Tara Westover, for a monthly reading.

The best-selling book is about Tara's experience growing up in the mountains of Idaho with survivalist parents who did not believe in public education or conventional medicine, which meant that she never went to school and she never saw a doctor. *Educated* is sold as a story of how this woman with no formal education, went on to get a PhD in history from Cambridge. You might assume that she was homeschooled growing up, but what is closer to the truth is that she received almost no education at all until she went to college. Instead, she worked at home with her parents helping her mother make herbalist remedies and helping her father in his junkyard. There were not even books around to read except for the Book of Mormon, other church papers and letters, and a children's science book.

Her older brother studied independently so that he could get a good score on the ACT and then lied to Brigham Young University (BYU) about having been homeschooled. He then helped Tara to do the same. Once at BYU, she slowly began to learn about the world around her and to deconstruct what she thought she knew, most of which she had been told by her father.

Growing up, she had almost no exposure to other perspectives other than those of her strict father. His viewpoint of life was fundamental Mormonism with a heavy dose of paranoia. She had never even heard about things such as the Holocaust or the Civil Rights Movement until she got to college, so there was a very steep learning curve for her.

The story of her education is fascinating. It is an inspiring story about a young girl taking control of her life and her education and seeing it as an opportunity to follow her own desires. However, the memoir is not only about her education but also deals with the struggles she faced in her own home.

Her brother was revealed to be extremely manipulative and physically

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Freshman Retreat *Damaris Lindsay*

Freshman Retreat was a day this first-year student will never forget. A day full of activities, full of teamwork and excitement, there was no way someone would not have fun.

The theme of the retreat was Monster's Inc/University and it tied very nicely into what the main takeaway of the retreat was. During the retreat, we were supposed to be learning about DA's Four Pillars, which we recite in the Dominican Academy Pledge every morning: 1) Study 2) Community 3) Just Actions 4) Prayer.

The start of the day was exciting. When the freshmen got to school, they did not know what to expect. We gathered in the mezzanine and waited to be let in the auditorium. What did surprise me however is how many upperclassmen who were not DAPs members that stopped and told us about the experience at their Freshman Retreat. It really got me excited to know what the day would be like. It also got me thinking about how much work the DAPs members put into putting this day together for us. As soon as the doors opened and we were allowed in, we almost immediately started with our first activity. The DAPs members split the freshmen into two groups. One group

would go on one side of the curtain in the auditorium and the other group on the other side. Then, one person on one side and another person on the other side would go up to the curtain. When someone pulled the curtain open the two people would have to say the other person's full name as fast as possible. Whoever said it the fastest won a piece of candy. I instantly realized that I still did not know everyone's names, let alone their last names. The game was fun and I think it was a great way to start this amazing retreat. After a couple of other games where we got to know the other people in our grade better and eating a bunch of chips and candy, we split up into two groups again and went to a very magical place, the roof. I have never been more excited to do anything in my life. I felt like we were about to go to Narnia. We got on the roof and we played a game where two people had to wear gloves on their dominant hand, a couple of people had to use their dominant hand, a couple had to use their least dominant hand, and the rest could use both hands. We all had to pick up coins and the contest was to see who could pick up the most coins. I was in the group that could use both

hands. When all the coins were picked up, we saw who had the most and who had the least. The person with the most had used both hands, and the person with the least had to wear a glove. Then we were asked if anyone thought to help the person who had to wear the glove, and out of all the people on the roof, only one person thought to help. It made me realize that most people always think to help themselves before helping others. It also made me think of how great of a community we have here at school. After lunch, we did more activities, and to end the day, we went to Mass. Ms. McCann, who coordinated this retreat, was looking for volunteers to read at Mass, and I decided that it would be a good idea for me to read. I needed to work on my public speaking and I already knew when to go up to read. The Mass was a great way to end this wonderful day.

This frosh thanks the DAPS members for putting together a wonderful day. It took a lot of work and it came out great. I look forward to the opportunity to be in DAPS and to become a part of this retreat for freshmen. This day is a highlight of my freshman year so far!

Educated *continued from page 1*

abusive to Tara growing up. After one of these violent incidents, he would try to convince Tara that it was just a game and that she had misunderstood.

Alongside her brother, Tara's parents would also say the same thing when she would confront them about issues. For a long time, this gas lighting was very effective in making her question her memories and her reality. It made her believe she was going crazy because her brother and her parents were rewriting history.

Throughout the memoir, she addresses the question of why it took her so long to confront the abuse personally and then subsequently with her parents. Even as just a reader of the memoir, you can

empathize with Tara and can see that the constant fear must have been an exhaustive state for Tara to have lived in.

This freshman could go on and on about the great challenges that Tara faced, for there are so many interesting details, but that would spoil the plot! Tara Westover is such a brave and extraordinary person, and I am so glad that she got to share her experience with the world. Reading this book made me feel grateful for everything I have.

This extremely powerful memoir was impossible to put down and I highly recommend it.

There's a lot I left out of my review of *Educated*, so if this brief synopsis interested you, then I recommend getting

the rest of Tara Westover's story, by reading *Educated* yourself.

Credits:

Editors-in-Chief:	Anna Hartmann Rachel Hartmann Kiara Ortiz
Managing Editors:	Grace Marks Gabiella Montalvo Isabella Quatela
Copy Chiefs:	Katherine Izzo Alessia Coluccio Lauren Mlicko
Photo Credits:	Ms. Jo Ann Fannon
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Sophomore Retreat *Quinn Pasmantier*

It was the first Friday in February, well before eight o'clock, when the DA sophomores gathered in the auditorium to prepare for their annual retreat, an event designed to build upon the lessons they learned in freshman year during Urban Plunge.

A short Mass at the onset of the retreat got the students in the right mindset. It included an excellent homily about the purpose of helping others, and the priest even handed out a poem on that subject to everyone. It was a short ten-line composition, called "I Have Only Just A Minute" by Dr. Benjamin Mays, which succinctly explained how it is up to everyone to use their time to make good decisions. The students were told to keep this theme in mind throughout their day as they traveled from DA to their service sites.

From there, the sophomores were split up into seven small groups, all named after where they would be going, namely NY Common Pantry (Harlem), NY Common Pantry (Bronx), Little Sisters of the Assumption, Hour Children, Mary Manning Walsh Home, and the final two groups were both sent to the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen.

All groups were led to their destinations by parent or teacher chaperones, either utilizing the subway or just walking if they could. Once they arrived, it was straight to work. The type of experience each student had depended on what group they were placed in: some packed food, others wrapped toys, a few groups even got the opportunity to directly interact with the people they were helping. For example, the NY Common Pantry group was provided with iPads and used them to take food orders face-to-face from the guests waiting in line. Likewise, the Holy Apostles group would bus tables and serve on food lines to provide basic meals for anyone who walked in with a ticket. It can be uncomfortable serving strangers, but the idea of the Sophomore Retreat is to teach students to push past these barriers and become familiar with the idea of service as an act of kindness that affects real people every day.

After a short lunch break, everyone returned to DA. Even though the volunteering was done, the retreat itself was far from over.

All of the groups were given a large sheet of paper and some markers and asked to write down any expectations versus reality differences they experienced

during the retreat. The papers were hung on the walls of the Auditorium, and a few minutes were set aside for each group to present what they had written down. Then everyone watched a TED talk given by Fr. Greg Boyle on "kinship" and its importance. He spoke mainly about his experience in reforming criminals, and how important it is to realize that everyone has the capacity to help. To solidify this point, two seniors, Julia Ayroso and Sophie Smith, came in to share their own experiences with service. They asked thought-provoking questions, like "When was a time where you have allowed yourself to be vulnerable during service?" or "Were there any moments where your service frustrated you?" The audience collaborated to answer the questions, and through it, gained a deeper understanding of how to approach possibly awkward or unexpected situations during service.

The experience ended when Dr. Cagney led everyone through a series of quiet reflections.

As a special treat (thank you, Mrs. McMahon!), everyone received brownies. This sophomore truly believed she learned something invaluable during her time at this year's retreat, and she looks forward to next year's retreat.

Why I Dance *Lorelei Cadorette*

When I stepped into my first ballet class 11 years ago I was enormously excited. I arrived ready to dance with my little pink skirt and very uncomfortable and tightly fitting leotard decorated with silver stars. The ballet teacher beckoned me into the hot studio when it was time for class to begin....and I happily obliged. The soft piano music filled the air and we started our first combination: plies. As I bent my knees and lowered myself closer to the floor, I could feel my muscles clenching with a burning sensation. It was at that moment I realized dance would be a source of both pain and pleasure in the coming years.

After my first ballet class, I tried other sports to make sure dance was the right

one for me. I tried soccer, basketball, tennis, and even baseball. Yet somehow with every sport I tried, I would either get hit in the face with the ball or get easily bored. Once I learned that dance was the best sport for me, I stuck with it.

I am currently still doing ballet in addition to other styles of dance, six days a week for about four to five hours per day. It is quite a commitment, and to be completely honest, it has been challenging to keep up with dance, my social life, and freshman schoolwork. For example, if someone asks me to go to get food with them after school, my candid response is: "I can't! I have dance."

Dance is hard work. However, it is the athleticism and artistic elements that

make me want to continue to do it. Dance can be incredibly frustrating, especially when it comes to rejection from auditions, difficulty with a new step, and pushing your body to its limits. But it redeems when things start to fall into place, such as getting accepted to a professional company, nailing five pirouettes, or finally earning your spot at the front of the line. Dance has given me wonderful opportunities such as acceptance to American Ballet Theater summer intensive and Bolshoi Ballet summer intensive. Ever since that first ballet class, I have worked hard to get where I am in dance today, and I plan on continuing to work as hard as I can to achieve my maximum potential in this art form.

AP Biology in UN *Rachel Hartmann*

Lincoln's birthday was when the students in AP Biology braved the cold weather to meet at the United Nations for the annual *Women and Girls in Science* assembly. This event was started five years ago by Princess Dr. Nisreen El-Hashemite. In order to recognize the role of girls and women in science. This year the topic was the interconnection of the economy with women and girls in tech, innovation, and science.

The class was led by Dr. Serpagli, our teacher as well as co-author in a chapter of the book *#February11* by The Royal Academy of Science International Trust. We made our way in the UN filled with excitement and anticipation for the day ahead. Once inside, we were amazed by the building of the UN.

Then the girls entered the impressive general assembly hall which seemed very familiar from television sequences and social media snippets.

There were many splendid speakers from across the country discussing the achievements of women and girls in science.

The event started with an introduction by the President of the General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande.

The statistics listed throughout the event were telling. There are three times more men in digital sectors and only 30 percent of all scientists are women. There are only 12 percent of women in machine learning. As well, there are less than 3 percent of female tech entrepreneurs who receive funding. For women of color, it is less than 1 percent. These statistics made me realize just how far the female gender still has to go in science.

Speaker Angelique Johnson, CEO and founder of MEMstin, said, "There could be a woman with a solution to our problems, but she is sitting somewhere with her solution in her mind because she is not supported and not funded."

Another key speaker was Miss America 2020, Camille Schrier, who has a dual bachelor of science degree in biochemistry and systems biology. In addition, the eldest daughter of Malcolm X, Attallah Shabazz, also spoke. Both gave impressive

lectures about women and girls in science.

Dr. Princess Nisreen El-Hashemite ended the conference by saying, "The greatest poverty is ignorance and the greatest wealth is education and knowledge." Such words appropriately wrapped up the conference with a note to work harder on gaining equality.



R. Hartmann

Dr. L. Serpagli

Princeton Certamen *Leia Sahyoun, Sam Salcedo*

Twenty *lingua Latina* lovers set off in the last Saturday morning of February to compete in the Princeton Certamen. The DA team, equipped with the knowledge of obscure Roman myths, took a long bus ride from the school to Princeton University.

When we arrived we were excited and energetic to meet some of our competition. Textbooks, study guides, and stacks of flashcards caught our attention. Chatter dwindled and the first activity began. Professor Caroline Cheung from the Princeton Classics Department gave an opening speech on her studies in Rome. We learned about everyday life in Ancient Rome including aspects of cooking and shopping. A lot of Roman traditions are waiting to be discovered and Cheung encouraged us to be curious in ancient language and culture. Then the novice and intermediate teams went off to compete. We wished them *bonam fortunam*. The advanced team had a few

hours to explore Princeton and to mingle with other high school Latin students.

We walked around Princeton's campus in admiration of the beautiful buildings before settling down to a delicious lunch punctuated by review "Apicius! Dido! Livy!" Each team member recalled different Roman figures between chews - a study guide in one hand and sandwich in the other. However, in what seemed to be no time, we had to go back to the main building. It was time to compete.

We met the other teams which were all nice and which prefaced round one bonding over our love for Latin. As the first round commenced, teams were buzzing in to answer left and right. Everyone knew the answers after only three or four words of each question. The best feeling, though, was hearing our teammates exclaim the answers with utmost confidence. "Dido!" Yelled Leia. "Yes!" The rest of the team whispered under their breath. Now we had the

opportunity to answer two bonuses. For the bonus questions, we collaborated with our teammates to answer the questions. As we encouraged each other, we were able to answer the questions correctly. We were proud of each other. In between rounds, we checked on how our teammates were doing on the online scoreboards and discussed how impressed we were with our teammates.

Even though we did not advance to the final rounds, we stayed to watch and cheer for our favorites from the audience. From out of nearly thirty teams we placed around tenth. We were overall proud of our performance, and want to thank Ms. Cerulli for arranging our first time at a Certamen at an Ivy League university. Princeton was extremely welcoming and further fostered our interest in Latin. The Certamen Team will continue to practice and train for the next Certamen at Yale University. Until then, *salvete!*

ConsRvation *Alexis Wang*

Last year, after spending the summer learning Python at the American Museum of Natural History, this senior got the opportunity to do an internship during the school year! As part of the BridgeUP: STEM program, five other students and I were granted the opportunity to conduct a research project under a mentor at the museum. Together, our team was called, "ConsRvation", and our goal was to measure the land coverage change in the Solomon Islands using machine learning in R.

First, some background knowledge. The Solomon Islands is a country located northeast of Australia, near the Great Barrier Reef. It has a population of around 600,000 with about 85% of them relying on farming and agriculture as their main source of food and income. The islands are also home to many native animal and plant species, supporting a high amount of biodiversity. By measuring the land cover change, we can gain insights into how the land is being used and changing over time.

Machine learning is a type of artificial intelligence or AI. AI is the broad term referring to methods where the computer is taught how to complete a task without explicitly programming it to. Every machine learning model requires a training dataset and a validation dataset. As the name suggests, a training dataset is used to train the model and allow it to learn, while a validation dataset is used

after the training is done as a final "test" to see how accurate the model is. Think of it as the practice problems versus the final test.

Our data included three satellite images of the Solomon Islands from the years 1947, 2015, and 2017. Our training data consisted of spatial polygons created by the program QGIS, classified into three classes: forest, not forest, and ocean.

We spent the first few months completing an R tutorial on Datacamp and doing practice challenges using machine learning. Then, we were ready to start.

The primary function of our model was the `superClass` function. To maximize its accuracy, we experimented among three different parameters: `model`, `kfold`, and `nsamples`. My partner and I were in charge of seeing which training dataset produced the highest accuracy. After experimenting, we found that, respectively, `knn`, `20`, and `maxmin` (a function we created) produced the most accurate classification results. Our final training data consisted of 30 polygons with three classes. Afterwards, we used these parameters together and visualized the results.

After finding the most accurate parameters, we were ready to run the final algorithm and visualize the results. There's a clear increase in deforestation activity, especially near the coast,

most likely due to the development of infrastructure since 1947. Unfortunately, our algorithm had trouble classifying sand bars, deep waters, and small islands, especially since the 1947 photo had many inconsistencies. As a result, it mistakenly believed that the ocean surrounding the islands was land. So when we compared the 2015 and 2017 images, it showed that the land turned into ocean! Despite the inaccuracies, there are still indicators of an overall decrease in forest cover and the need for improved conservation methods.

It was an amazing experience to work with AI for the first time. I'm still mind-blown to think that we were able to build a model that can actually guess what type of land cover is shown! Now, we can run satellite images from different years and observe the results. I'm reassured knowing there is now research being done on this widely unknown country. It was also just great working with the team – lots of fun times at the museum after school waiting for our algorithm to run!

Overall, huge thanks to the Helen Gurley Revocable Trust, the BridgeUP: STEM team, Dr. Louise Crowley, Dr. Mary Blair, and our mentor, Dr. Camera Ford, for making this possible! Applications are open. So feel free to check out their website or email me for more info.

Mock Trial *continued from page 1*

(Nicole Belyy). Additional lawyers are Sophie Smith, Kaila Fernandez, and Veronica Kolacz. This team went to the New York County Criminal Court on a Tuesday night to compete against Democracy Prep High School. They proved that Morgan Thornberry's had done a thorough investigation which resulted in the conviction of Phoenix Jones for buying and selling illegal goods and shipping them over state lines. The prosecution was successful and won this portion of the competition.

The defense team includes Phoenix Jones, a computer whiz accused of criminal activity (Daisy Whiting); Blair Overland, a Rover driver who transports mysterious packages for the defendant (Emily Barret); and Kaden Keller, Phoenix's Econ professor (Carolina Crosby). In addition, the lawyers are Joanna Konopka, Gabriella Montalvo, and Isabella Martinez. This team competed on the first Monday in March against the Bronx School for Law and Finance. Better prepared than its opponents, the defense was successful and

won this portion of the competition.

The impressive mastery of what to do with a criminal case by both the prosecution and defense teams means that Dominican Academy will advance to the next round.

Last year, the DA Mock Trial Team made it to the third round of the competition. This year, the team is hopeful that it is on its way to doing just as well if not better.

Fed Challenge *Kiara Ortiz*

"Should the Federal Reserve keep its benchmark interest rate where it is at the present time or should the central bank lower it as the Wall Street crowd wants it to do?"

That is the question!

Five DA seniors in AP Economics prepare to present the state of the economy to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. They are participants in the Fed Challenge, an annual high school competition across the country.

The Fed Challenge brings real-world economics into the classroom. Since the beginning of the school year, these seniors have been analyzing economic conditions and assiduously preparing a monetary policy recommendation, specifically with respect to deciding whether to change the federal funds rate, which is the basic interest rate upon which all other interest rates are developed. This is the interest rate banks charge one another for overnight loans needed to meet reserve requirements that oblige banks to keep an amount of cash within their vaults or deposits with their local Fed branch. The Fed Challenge has allowed these five seniors to step into the role of Fed governors and decide how to promote financial stability.

After setting the scene (which is a simulated FOMC meeting) and introducing the seniors as governors (who have voting rights), Gillian Teh starts a discussion of economic indicators by analyzing the sluggish Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth. She explains

that growth slowed sharply toward the end of last year and continues to grow at a lackluster pace. She believes that the fed funds rate should be lowered in order to boost current growth.

Then Kate Ohotin explains that the unemployment is under 4%, a low percentage considering that full employment is stated to be at 95%. The crisis in unemployment is admittedly over with monthly job growth topping 200,000 in the last three months. Kate believes that the current interest rate (slightly under 2%) is appropriate for this growth.

Manufacturing is next on the agenda, and Maria Wilson describes that this sector of the economy has actually been in a technical recession during most of the past year. She states that production weakened sharply and emphasizes the significance of global trade for many manufacturers. Maria votes to lower the rate.

This writer proceeds to report on the low inflation that has persisted in the United States. The Fed has undershot its 2% inflation target over the past three years and does not expect to hit 2% in the near term. She agrees with Kate in keeping the rate where it is in order to maintain price stability.



Left to right: M. Wilson, G. Teh, K. Ortiz, C. Crotty, K. Ohotin

Lastly, Claudia Crotty is put in a difficult position. With half of her teammates proposing to keep the rate where it is, and the other half proposing to lower it, her vote is the deciding factor. Her vote will depend on the global risks to the economy such as the tariff war, relations with the Middle East, and containment of novel viruses.

These seniors were scheduled to make their presentation at the Federal Reserve Building located in lower Manhattan. That was the ritual followed by seniors in AP Economics during the past 20 years. However, the concern regarding the impact of the COVID-19 virus has led the Fed to make a cautionary decision to hold its contest on a remote basis. This year's Fed Challenge team will for the first time deliver its presentation via conference calls with Bank judges across from students at the school during the previously arranged competition time.

Ski Trip *Kate Izzo*

It was nearly sunset, and my friends and I were happily chatting as the Manhattan skyline got smaller on the horizon. It was January 24th, and we were off to the annual DA Ski Trip. The bus ride wasn't very long, but it was a lot of fun. My friend Alanna and I were sitting together for the whole three hours (I'm honestly very lucky that she didn't get sick of me by the time we left the city), and we shared music, jokes, and snacks.

It was already dark by the time we got to the hotel, but our spirits were just as

high as they were when we got on the bus at the school. When we arrived, we settled into our rooms and got ready for dinner during which time Ms. Reardon gave us our schedule for the next morning. We all got excited about our first day of skiing in the new decade. After we were dismissed, I made my way back to the room I was sharing with my friends Alanna, Mariela, and Abby. We did facemasks and watched a musical before curfew came around, and we went to sleep.

My alarm went off at 6:30 am, and it

was immediately silenced and obeyed. We put on some music and got ready to go to breakfast at 7:30. After we ate, everyone was sent upstairs to put on our ski apparel. We were loaded onto the buses with our ski passes, ski rental forms, bulky coats, and high energy. As we drove from the hotel to the mountain, the clouds got more and more ominous until it began drizzling as we pulled into the parking lot.

We waited in line in the rental shop for nearly a half-hour, and while we

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Little Women *Elli Ray*

DA has provided a transformation of the classic 19th century novel *Little Women* into a play this theatrical season of school. The walk upon the stage was in March but the first steps of the actual production were made much earlier. The Drama Club held auditions and rehearsals months earlier after which time the cast was set.

The 1868 book written by Louise May Alcott was adapted into a play by Sara Spencer. It takes us through the journey of four young women: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy. The scene is set in mid-19th century New England while the girls' father is away at war. As they long for his return, the girls go through countless adventures and emotional whirlwinds.

Meg March, the oldest of the four girls, is played by Veronica Kolacz (a junior). Margaret, also known as Meg by her sisters, is 16 years old at the beginning of the novel and is characterized by her refined manners and proper etiquette. Her biggest insecurity is the plain lifestyle that she and her family lead. Although Meg is always longing for a grander lifestyle, she is thankful for her family and is the

foundation that keeps her sisters together.

The second oldest sister is Josephine or Jo March, played by Grace Marks (a junior). Because of her unique personality and her progressive opinions, many view Jo as the main character of the four girls. Unlike her sister Meg, she is rambunctious and does not care what society thinks of her. She isn't afraid to flaunt her boyish mannerisms and even considers herself the 'man' of the house when their father is away at war. Her main goal throughout the novel is to become a writer.

Next is Elizabeth or Beth March who is played by Carolyn South (a junior). Beth has a subtle, but kind personality. She is only 13 years old at the beginning of the story but can also be seen as the most mature out of her four sisters. She is not concerned with social status like Meg, nor is she loud and attention-seeking like Jo. When Beth is not occupied with household chores, she loves to play on the family piano. She cares deeply for her mother and is willing to do anything to help her.

Amy March, played by Alanna Byrne (a sophomore), is the youngest of the four sisters. As the youngest, Amy feels ignored by her older sisters. She loves acting like a young lady by using (and usually mispronouncing) long words and scolding Jo when she acts unladylike. One of Amy's main flaws is her immaturity. She does not always understand the seriousness of the situation at hand and often complains and throws tantrums. Yet, Amy is fun and lovable and provides comic

Other performers are Tiffany Wu (a sophomore), Cassandra Tom (a freshman), Marisa Fernandez (a junior), and Maya Gabric (a sophomore), who plays Marmee, Aunt March, Laurie, and Hannah respectively. Each of these four characters brings unique elements to the plot of the show and offer much-needed support to the March sisters.

Through good and bad times, the March family stays together and faces each problem with strength and unity. The DA Drama Club put on *Little Women* during the month of March.

Ski Trip *continued from page 6*

were getting our skis, the weather had gotten worse. Alanna and I waited for Mariela and Abby to finish their rentals. We made our way to the "Bunny Hill" for Abby's first run. We made it to the bottom with some difficulty, as Abby had never skied before. She did really well, but the conditions were not good for a beginner. She went into the lodge for lunch and some shelter with Mariela. Alanna and I were only able to get maybe two runs in before we joined Mariela and Abby in the lodge.

After lunch, Alanna, Mariela, and I went for a few runs before we had to return our skis. We were all freezing and wet by the time everyone was packed into the bus to go back to the hotel. We had free reign until mass at 5:30 p.m. The local parish was welcoming and sweet to us. After mass, we went back to the hotel for dinner. It was Lunar New Year so the hotel was serving fried rice which was really good. Our little group retreated to

our hotel room for a quiet night. Alanna and I spent some time in the pool and hot tub. We brought our books down and read for a while and when we got back to the room, we took showers and got ready for bed. Before we fell asleep, Mariela and Abby joined in a few games of "Uno" and an off-brand version of "Jenga."

The next morning, my alarm went off at the same time and we got ready for our last day of the ski trip. Breakfast came and went without much incident - after we ate, everyone finalized packing and brought their bags to Ms. Reardon. We were ready for our final activity. Most of us were going roller-

skating, but a few girls went skiing again. I went roller-skating with Alanna, Mariela, and Abby. We all tried our best, but my balance isn't great in general, much less on wheels, so it was not my finest hour. But we all had a lot of fun and it was a perfect end to our trip.



Left to right: R. Mackenzie, Dr. L. Petit, I. Quatela

Acting Abroad *Tiffany Wu*

During the past summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to act in four movies in China. Not only did it help me improve my Mandarin, but it also taught me that a lot of hard work goes into each film. This has been one of the most surreal, tiring, and rewarding experiences I have ever encountered in my life.

The first filming location was HengDian, or as my mom likes to call it, "The Hollywood of China." It is a beautiful town with many breathtaking shooting bases, which was perfect for our movie which took place mainly in the wild. One movie typically takes two months to film. However, I was only in China for a little over one month, and I still had three other movies to film. Therefore, our time was extremely limited. We had to be at the filming site as soon as the sun rose. This did not include the time we needed to get hair and makeup done. Since my role was a leopard, hair and makeup was a crucial part of my transformation. I had to wake up at three a.m. every day and sit in the makeup chair for at least two hours. I would get my face painted and my hair curled. Afterward, I would be taken to the site where I waited until it was my turn to film. China is hot in general, but the HengDian climate was even worse. The temperature ranged from 91 to 98 degrees. My mom purchased many mini fans for me to use while I waited under the scorching sun. The producers kept handing us water to make sure we were hydrated, but we all barely drank.

On the first day of filming, there is a tradition for everyone to light incense and "bless" the upcoming movie. The director would say a few words, and we would just hope that the results of this movie would be successful. During our ceremony, everyone each had three sticks of incense to hold. Since incense radiated a lot of heat, and it was already boiling, I felt light-headed. I did not think much of it at first, but as the director was speaking, I could hear

his words slowly fade out. I told my mom I had to leave the crowd for a bit, but she told me to stay for the group picture. I could not stand up anymore, and I fell to the ground. Members of the crew immediately carried me to the shade and gave me iced water. My mom fanned me, and the executive producer found a chair for me to rest on. That was when I realized how hard this actually was. From all the heat to my stomach cramps, I wondered if I could handle a whole month of this. After I cooled off, I filmed a few scenes and the inner dreamer in me started to rise again.

I filmed the next two movies in HeNan, filming in touristy spots. When it came to the fourth and final movie, we had to travel to the TaiHang Mountains. This movie is about the Japanese-Chinese War that took place all the way until 1945. Since a lot of the scenes took place on the battlefield, we had to film in the middle of the forest. A scene that stood out to me was when we were told to spy on a few soldiers. We had to lie on the ground to avoid being seen. Unfortunately, the place where the director wanted me to lie on was an ant's nest. I asked if we could maybe switch to a different place, but the director said the shot looked perfect in the camera. I tried extra hard to finish that scene in one take so I could leave. Thinking about the cockroach that I found in my shoe still gives me chills to this day, but the finished product was worth it.

Ever since I was little, I wrongly thought that being an actor was the easiest job. You just had to memorize some lines, sit back, and watch your story come to life. I have now learned that movies are so much more than a perfect tale played out in two hours. I am so grateful I got to have this experience. If I had the chance to do it all over again, I would not change a thing.

Stress Eating *Ava Filocamo*

How many times have you watched a scene in a movie where the characters deal with heartbreak or finals week by digging into a chocolate cake or a gallon of ice cream? It is a universal instinct to soothe our mood with comfort food. Teens experience this behavior over social relationships, parental restrictions or sports commitments. A common stress-eating situation even happens during the first days of high school and college -- known as the dreaded "freshman fifteen." When teen girls come under stress, we often feel that the most immediate way to cope with that stress is to eat. While sometimes it's perfectly acceptable to indulge in a cookie or piece of cake, we have to learn how to separate our emotions from food. Stress-eating occurs when people use comfort food or overeating to help deal with situations beyond control, in a way they would otherwise avoid. Many teens stress eat because it's a way to feel comfortable within themselves. We wallow and pity ourselves, using food to momentarily raise our spirits. Indulgent foods help us feel like we are victorious over a negative situation -- we use our chocolate donut as a shield and the baguette as a sword!

The first step in avoiding the stress-eating trap is to recognize the behavior. Next, we need a plan that offers alternatives to the unhealthy habit of stress-eating. Stress relievers might include sweating out the stress with exercise, taking a minute outside with nature, enjoying a hot shower, or hanging out with friends. We also need to be mindful of our hunger. Before you dive into a pint of ice cream or box of cookies, ask yourself: are you really hungry? Usually, when we are bored or tired, our mind thinks that our stomach is "starving." Try drinking a glass of water first! If you find that the glass of water wasn't very filling and you're still craving food, have a piece of dark chocolate. It satisfies the sweet craving, feels indulgent and will get you through a long night of studying. If you really do feel stressed out and want to find comfort in food without eating an entire chocolate cake, try eating an apple with peanut butter, or even popcorn. You will feel satisfied and full without the guilt or regret, and that will make you feel mightier than your baguette sword!