



The Blarney Stone

“Monthly News Carved for Bishop McNamara”



February 2024 Winter Ball & Lent Edition

FEBRUARY EDITION

Welcome to the February 2024 Issue of the Blarney Stone, the official newspaper of Bishop McNamara Catholic School! As the first semester of the year continues, there are many events to read about, including Valentines Day, St. Patrick’s Day, and the thrill of sports from scholastic to professional. Additionally, multiple students and members of the faculty are featured in the February 2024 edition!



Written By: Grant Naese

WINTER BALL

On February 24th, 2024, Bishop McNamara held its annual

Winter Ball in the gym. The “Disco Ball” theme created a fun ambiance to dance the night away. Many people wore outfits ranging from elegant dresses to dapper suits. Everyone looked amazing as they took to the dance floor. The Winter Ball Court:

Freshman

- ◆ Rylan Barzantny
- ◆ Henrik Frandrey

Sophomores

- ◆ Callaghan O’Connor
- ◆ Tucker Inman

Juniors

- ◆ Payton Langelett
- ◆ Dominic Panozzo

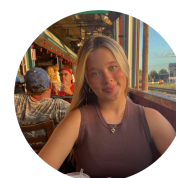
Seniors

- ◆ Nick Andrews
- ◆ Christian Provost
- ◆ Mitchell Krizan
- ◆ Parker Wolfe

Winter Ball King

- ◆ Abner Garcia

It was a fun night for the students, and a great way to wave goodbye to winter, and hello to spring!



Written By: Reagan Kaner

NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTIONS

On Wednesday, February 28th our many of our High School Juniors and some High School Seniors were inducted into the National Honor Society. Being a member of NHS is highly sought after by members of the student body and is a great honor for those being inducted. The outgoing officers, President Grant Naese, Vice President Sarah Berg, and Secretary Christian Provost, spoke at the



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ceremony and lit four candles, each symbolizing one of the pillars of NHS: Scholarship, Service, Leadership, and Character. Mr. Granger also addressed the school, stressing the importance of integrity in all facets of life. The officers passed their positions on to the incoming officers, President Kenna Brosseau, Vice President Emily Storer, and Secretary Claire Goselin. Congratulations to all who were inducted!

PREFECT APPLICATIONS

Bishop McNamara Catholic School's Prefect Leadership Program stands as a testament to the institution's dedication to nurturing leadership qualities in its students. With a legacy spanning over a century, the program offers a structured pathway for students to assume leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to their school community.

The Prefect Board, comprising students from various grade levels, spearheads this initiative, overseeing different aspects of school life, from academics to athletics to service. The application process, starting with applications posted on March 5th and concluding with submissions due by March 19th, involves a thorough review of candidates' qualifications. This is followed by interviews conducted by current Prefects and positional moderators during the weeks of March 25th and April 8th.

Selected Prefects not only uphold the school's values of integrity and dedication but also commit to fulfilling specific responsibilities outlined for each position. This includes attending biweekly meetings and collaborating with positional moderators to ensure effective execution of their duties. Denied applicants are offered alternative leadership opportunities within

the school, ensuring inclusivity and engagement across the student body.

Through the Prefect Program, Bishop McNamara Catholic School continues its tradition of excellence, fostering a culture of leadership, service, and community among its students. As Prefects embark on their journey, they embody the school's mission of maximizing student potential and shaping the leaders of tomorrow.



Written By: Grant Naese

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: CALLAGHAN O'CONNOR

With the basketball season ending, sophomore Callaghan O'Connor shares his thoughts on the 23-24 season, as well as some tips on how to manage the feat of being a student-athlete. When asked to give a



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highlight from the season, Cal emphasized the Rockford-Lutheran game. At this match, the Irish were down by fifteen at halftime and came back and won the game by four. Cal credits this to the team's defense. He will also always remember the game at Timothy Christian, where the Irish battled until the end and beat the Trojans in front of their whole student section. When asked about his dunk against Dwight, Cal said, "It was awesome. It felt great to check that off the bucket list." Even though Cal puts a significant amount of time into improving his game on both the basketball court and baseball field, he also never fails to put time into the factor that matters most at Bishop McNamara: academics. On the way to practice in the winter, the Notre Dame commit makes sure to complete his homework in the car. "The key to staying on top of things is to manage your time well, and

don't waste opportunities to get work done," he said. He can't wait to get baseball season started, stating, "I can't wait to be back on the field."



Written By: Reagan Kaner

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: REAGAN KANER

On February 10th, sophomore Reagan Kaner, took a trip down to Springfield, Illinois to compete in the VFW essay contest. The Veteran of Foreign Wars is an organization that helps support and bring awareness to our veterans. Each year they hold a Voice of Democracy writing contest available for high school students to compete and win scholarships. This year's topic was "What Are the Greatest Attributes of Our Democracy?" Reagan submitted an essay and had great success. She won first

place in the Kankakee Auxiliary Post. This gave her the opportunity to compete in the overall District 7, which she took home the win for as well. Because she won both preliminary competitions, she was given the honor of taking a trip to Springfield to present her speech at the final competition to compete to win a trip to Washington D.C. She incredibly placed 4th in the state and received a scholarship for all her hard work. Not only was this an amazing honor, but it also inspired Reagan to do more in this field of work and even possibly start a podcast with the students she met there.

Reagan had a great experience in Springfield, seeing the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and the Military Museum. Reagan added, "My favorite memory was meeting the kids there. Everyone was so welcoming; I still talk to all of them today and we are



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thinking of starting a podcast together.” The VFW Voice of Democracy writing contest is an amazing opportunity for high school students around the country and proves to inspire students, such as Reagan, to continue doing good works and supporting our veterans.



Written By: Cassidy Novak

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: MRS. SORICH

Mrs. Sorich is a Spanish teacher here at Bishop McNamara, teaching both Spanish 1 and Spanish 2. She and her husband have lived in Kankakee County for the past 34 years, but this is not where she grew up. Mrs. Sorich was born in Mexicali, a city in the state of Baja, California, which is in Mexico. She attended high school there and studied

psychology CETYS Universidad in Tijuana Baja California, Mexico as well. Not only that, but she also attended KCC and Liberty University. She earned her bachelor’s degree in psychology and minored in Christian life coaching. Previously, Mrs. Sorich taught at St. Anne and Kankakee high schools. She has been teaching Spanish courses at KCC for 23 years as a part-time adjunct professor. During this time, she developed a training course for medical, legal, and community Spanish interpreters. Mrs. Sorich has been married for 39 years and has 11 children and 15 grandchildren. All of her children graduated from Bishop McNamara. Her family is an important part of her life and spending time with her grandkids is a favorite pastime. She also enjoys going on walks, reading, and health coaching. Faith plays a crucial role in Mrs. Sorich’s life. She was very active in her faith life since she was a teenager and was even a

novitiate. Later, she heard God’s calling to marriage and followed her vocation. Her home parish is St. Joseph, Bradley and she is very involved in the church. She is a lector and Eucharistic minister at masses. Mrs. Sorich is also a youth minister, especially with the Hispanic community, and helps out at parishes in different ministries with the youth. Not only that, but she is also a natural family planning instructor and gives talks throughout the diocese. Mrs. Sorich would like to share her motto, “Life is beautiful, and I enjoy it,” with the school. She encourages everyone to enjoy life because it is truly a blessing and her advice to the students is: always put God first.

Written By: Sarah Hoehn

PREFECT SPOTLIGHT: MANNY VELASQUEZ

Manny was first asked which role he performs as a prefect and what tasks he must take



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on. Manny's answer is as follows, "I am privileged to be the Service Perfect for this academic year. My main job at Service Perfect is to promote service opportunities to students. I also help to set up service opportunities like Harvest Sunday." Manny was also inquired about why he chose to take on the job of the service prefect. "I chose to become the Service Prefect because service is a big part of my life. I always like to lend a hand to my community." Manny's answers are very sincere, he tells us why and how he takes on his role as the service prefect.

The question about how Manny was inspired to pursue his job as the service prefect was inquired next. Manny gave a very straightforward answer, "I got inspired to become Service Prefect because service is something I enjoy doing. What inspired me the most was getting the opportunity to

inspire others. Growing up, I grew up in violent neighborhoods and I wanted to inspire the youth in my community that they can accomplish great things, no matter where they come from." The response he gave was heartwarming; Manny truly cares about the community and wants to do whatever it takes to make it a better place.

Although there are many enjoyable parts that come with being a prefect, Manny was asked to choose his favorite part during his prefect experience so far. "My favorite part of being Service Prefect was getting to run Harvest Sunday. I have helped in Harvest Sunday before, but getting to run it was extremely fun. I had fun getting to meet many of the donors. I appreciate every single donor, we had a bunch of leftover food in the CMO. We use this food to fill up the gift box. We are still going strong with the

gift box." Manny shares his experience doing Harvest Sunday. Harvest Sunday is an amazing service opportunity that many should try to pursue. Manny talks about how he previously done Harvest Sunday but never worked behind the scenes.

To conclude the interview, Manny was finally asked to share some advice for those applying for the role of service prefect for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year. "My best advice for anyone wanting to become Service Prefect is this, put your heart and soul in any service opportunity you help out in. During any service opportunity, I always make sure the people I am serving know that I am dedicated during each special experience. The other helpers also get inspired when they know you are dedicated. I am excited to see who will become the next Service Prefect. I hope they are willing to put their heart and



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soul in this position.” Manny’s goal is that his advice will inspire many to apply as the service prefect for the upcoming school year. His advice not only means putting your heart and soul into service but also everything that you do. The service prefect may be viewed as just a job to some, but Manny views it as much more and he hopes others will as well.

Written By: Miles Serpe

SAINT PATRICK’S CRAFT

Materials

- ◆ 72 Yards Total of Festive Ribbon
- ◆ 6 Different Patterns
- ◆ 12 Yards a Piece
- ◆ 3 ½ Inches Thick
- ◆ 1 Wire Wreath Frame
- ◆ 1 Yd 5 Inch Thick Festive Ribbon
- ◆ Stapler
- ◆ Ruler
- ◆ Scissors

Instructions

Step 1: Set your ruler out and using your scissors and 6 different patterns of ribbon, begin cutting 7 in strips.

Step 2: Once you have six large piles of ribbon, organize them into a pattern of your choice.

Step 3: Start tying each piece of ribbon around the outside in a pattern of your choice making one knot at a time.

Step 4: Continue tying around the second rung, skip the third rung, and finish tying around the fourth run.

Step 5: String the 5 inch thick ribbon through the outer rung and make a loop as long or short as you want.

Step 6: Staple the loop and your Irish Wreath is complete!

BOYS’ BASKETBALL SENIOR NIGHT AND GUYRISH

On February 13th, our Bishop Mac Boys’ Basketball team hosted senior night vs. Dwight High School. Three seniors were honored that night including Abner Garcia, Tyler Bobzin, and Robert Hutson. The game was electric with a full student section and more family and friends than we could possibly count. The game resulted in a great 55-31 Irish win which was exciting for our seniors. Senior Abner Garcia shared his thoughts on the game. “It was a great experience to see the fulfillment of our four years of hard work paying off.” The contribution of these three seniors is something our school will never forget.

On the same night, our amazing Irish Poms team performed their annual Guyrish event. They did a mashup of



Created By: Sarah Hoehn



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tons of songs and the theme was military. It was so fun to watch, and the crowd seemed to love it. Each team member was paired with a guy that they partnered and danced with. Each pair of partners even bought each other gifts to celebrate the success of the dance. Overall, senior night was a hit that everyone had a great time at. We honored our seniors, watched great performances, and won the game.



Written By: Cassidy Novak

GIRLS' BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

The season for the varsity girls' basketball team recently came to an end. The regional championship concluded with St. Joseph Ogden winning the game 45-41. Varsity starters Leigha Brown and Trinity Davis

summarize playoffs by saying the game was highly intense and they played as a team, but they could have done better, and their full potential wasn't reached. When asked about what they would've done differently, they expressed how next season they plan on leaving certain things behind them as soon as they enter the court. Despite the season's end, the girls had much fun throughout this year's basketball season. "My favorite memory was when we won against Bloomington Central Catholic and celebrated in the locker room by spraying water on our coach!" stated Trinity Davis when asked about her favorite memory of the 23/24 season. Leigha Brown on the other hand said her favorite memory was the state farm tournament. "I loved going to the state farm tournament because it was a time of bonding which took our relationship from teammates to sisters." Freshman Trinitee

Thompson also shared her input saying that their season went well overall, and she loved being able to start on varsity at such a young age. "It felt really great being a freshman varsity starter, but it comes with a lot of responsibility being the youngest on the team and having to play a big part." She expressed how playing varsity was a great opportunity that allowed her to improve as a player and she's really looking forward to it next year. The hopes are high for next year as the team shares that their main goal will be reaching state. Overall, the girls' basketball 23/24 season was full of successes, fun times, and good memories that the players will remember forever.

Written By: Isabelle Garcia

BOYS' BASKETBALL PLAYOFFS

On February 23rd, our Bishop Mac Boys' Basketball team played in their final regional



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game vs. Fieldcrest. Unfortunately, the game resulted in an Irish loss and ended our season. They finished their season with 20 wins and 9 losses, which is a very successful season. It was a very bittersweet loss for the team, especially the three seniors. Senior Abner Garcia played his last game of his high school career and had this to say. "It was very sad that the season was over, but at the same time, we have to look at it with a positive perspective. We had a great season, a great time with each other, and a lot of fun. I am looking forward to whatever life has in store for us." Junior Cole Czako shared his thoughts on the game. "It was sad to see the seniors go. We did as much as we could. We could have beaten the team. It was sad but we tried, but it was nice to have everyone there." Overall, it was a great season for the Bishop Mac Boys' Basketball team, and we are looking forward to

seeing them play next year.



Written By: Cassidy Novak & Isabelle Garcia

POMS STATE

As the Poms Dance team season is now officially complete, I would like to reflect on the very successful season we had as a whole! The girls and I worked tirelessly at practice anywhere from 4-5 times every week not including dance competitions every single weekend. We took many first place titles and both seniors Tara Arsenau and myself, Maddie Russell, qualified for state performance for dance solos. Tara took a third place win the day our team qualified for state! I won first place at our first competition back in December. Both solos made it past the qualifying rounds at state,

placing us top 15 in state. We both got to perform our solos again and had so much fun despite the long, tiring day we had.

As far as the team is concerned, we competed our hip hop routine at state and took home a second place trophy! We got our highest score of the season and took home second place in state. We are very proud of the team and very proud of all the hard work, blood, sweat, and tears that went into the season whether it was in or out of practice. Congrats to all the girls on the Poms dance team!



Written By: Madeline Russell

CHESS STATE

The Bishop McNamara Chess Team recently went to state on February 9th and 10th. State was hosted in the Peoria Civic



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Center in which the Fightin' Irish faced off against the likes of teams in ranges of 1A- 8A. The team [went](#) 3 wins out of 7 matches. This is impressive considering the strength of schedule which included the likes of Chicago Walter Payton (#2 Seed), Homewood Flossmoor (#15 seed), and St. Ignasius (#26 seed). The Irish placed #81 and placed top 3 for 1A schools. This state performance was a perfect ending to a high-performance season. The Irish only had one regular season loss against Manteno, leading to a conference record of (1-1) against the rivals. This was soon resolved after a stellar defeat of Manteno by the Irish at the Sectionals Tournament. Overall, the Irish Chess Team proved this year that even in the tumultuous path due to the loss of many seniors, the Irish have a culture of resilience and a hunger and desire to strive in anything we do.

Written By: Oliver Heinrich

LENTEN CAMPAIGN

As we approach the middle of the Lenten season, Bishop McNamara's Lenten Campaign

is in full swing! We are collecting many donations from all grades. These profits are going directly towards the "Fortitude" charity, and we are providing money to make dinners and meals for the homeless. The dinners are fixed and served by students Freshman-Senior at Bishop McNamara and on a volunteer basis. We are thankful as a school and as a community to be able to give back to the poverty-struck in our own community. We have also had many charity donation events for various needs in and out of the school. We have had much success thus far in gathering donations and canned goods for Fortitude and for our food pantries, and we hope to continue this bounty to give back to others.



Written By: Madeline Russell

SPRING PLAY: THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE

Bishop McNamara's spring play: The Lion, The Witch, and

the Wardrobe was performed On March 2nd and 3rd. The play told the classic story by C.S. Lewis from the Chronicles of Narnia. The story follows four children Lucy (Frankie Agresti), Edmund (Kevin Cash), Susan (Caitlyn Lindner), and Peter (Walter, Krause) as they venture into the magical realm of Narnia. In Narnia, the children encounter many new friends including Tumnus (Aaliyah Gray), Mrs. Beaver (Sara Weldon), and Mr. Beaver (Jace Havener). The children have to face the evil White Witch (Hailey Neill) with her army Fenris Ulf (Ryane Jefferson) and the Dwarf (Madison Rachwalski). Thankfully Aslan (Payton Fritz) and the other people of Narnia (Anna Zucker, Gianna Jungman, Nolan White, Mia Burns) [are able to](#) save the day and the children become the new rulers of Narnia. The show was able to run smoothly thanks to the "wood nymphs", or stage crew (Betsy Stipp, Gwen Brouillet, Claire Brouillet, Catherine Steffes, Payton Provost). This spectacular show was sold out both nights thanks to director Stacie Knefelkamp, assistant director Allie Haug, and stage



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manager Sandy Gray. Congratulations to the entire cast, crew, and everyone who helped put the show together.



Written By: Hailey Neil

LENTEN SEASON

As we progress through the Lenten season, some people are probably wondering what Lent actually is. Lent is a 40-day period of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. The season begins on Ash Wednesday and comes to an end on Holy Thursday. We celebrate Lent in honor of the 40-day period that Jesus spent fasting in the desert while being tempted by Satan.

We practice three main things, fasting, prayer, and almsgiving. The first of these is fasting, which is when we practice self-control, usually, it entails giving up something, but it is more so meant for us to abstain from modern luxuries so we can spend more time with God in prayer. The second of the practices is prayer, during lent we should be growing in our faith because we fast from luxuries, we are meant to be spending more time in prayer, though this can be the most difficult for some. The last of the practices is almsgiving or giving of alms. We practice this in many ways, some choose to

give money to churches or parishes, but we can also give time and our talents.



Written By: Riley Piazza

SUPER BOWL RECAP

In Super Bowl LVIII, the Kansas City Chiefs battled the San Francisco 49'ers in a stellar overtime saga, ultimately giving the throne once again to the Chiefs, the first team to win two in a row since Tom Brady and the Patriots back in 03' and 04'. With many standout performances of Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce, K.C Special Teams, Mecole Hardman, and to some people's beliefs, Taylor Swift, the Chiefs have officially built a dynasty. The Chiefs won 25 to 22. Important touchdowns came from CMC and MVS, and stellar kicking performances from Jack Moody and Harrison Butker. Jake Moody set the field goal length record in the Super Bowl and Harrison Butker subsequently broke the record. With many rumors of the Chief's faults throughout the season, like the wide receiver core and Patrick Mahomes' abilities, the Chiefs managed to prove everybody wrong.



Written By: Oliver Heinrich

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

Saint Patrick's Day, also known as the Feast of Saint Patrick, is a religious celebration that is held on March 17th, the recorded day of death for Saint Patrick. The holiday was first made an official Christian Holiday in the early 17th century. The holiday celebrates the arrival of the Christian faith in Ireland, though, it also celebrates the entirety of Irish culture. Modern celebrations of this holiday include large parades, parties, and also liturgical masses. Saint Patrick's Day is also celebrated in more unique countries than any other holiday.



Written By: Riley Piazza

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