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D.A. ALL DAY!

Lux et Veritas: D.A.'s Trip to Yale Certamen

In a remarkable exhibition of linguistic skill and classical knowledge, the Latin scholars of Dominican Academy recently participated in the prestigious Yale Certamen Latin competition. This annual event occurred on Saturday, November 9th, at the esteemed Yale University. Scholars from across the nation converged to engage in a challenging series of quizzes designed to assess their proficiency in the Latin

language, familiarity with Latin literature, and understanding of ancient Roman culture and mythology. With enthusiasm and expertise, the participants competed for recognition in a celebration of academic excellence and a shared passion for classical studies.

Certamen is a trivia competition made up of multiple rounds. In each round, two or three teams of four members each, representing different schools, compete head-to-head to answer questions on various Latin-related topics. Typically, each team member specializes in a unique area, ranging from Latin grammar to ancient Roman mythology, culture, and history. The competition offers multiple levels, from novice to advanced. Our intermediate team consisted of sophomores Monroe T., Bridget S., Tammy L., and myself. Meanwhile, juniors and seniors Lizzi M., Will M., Zosia K., Ella C., Garance H., Eileen S., Francesca S., and Emily W. had been divided into two advanced teams. The event begins with all teams in each level participating in the preliminary rounds. The top teams from each level will advance to the semifinals, eventually culminating in a final round where the strongest teams face off against each other.

In the weeks leading up to the much-anticipated competition, the D.A. teams committed themselves to thorough preparation during club meetings, in class, and outside school. Each week, they participated in practice rounds that simulated the challenges they would encounter, helping to build their confidence



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and refine their strategies. Additionally, they collaborated on crafting detailed study guides, combining their resources and insights to enhance their skills further. To stir up excitement and support for the event, the Latin Club organized a spirited bake sale on Monday, November 4th. The delightful aroma of freshly baked goods filled the air as they offered homemade treats, successfully raising funds while cultivating a sense of community and anticipation for the upcoming competition.

The day began early as the competing students, accompanied by Ms. Oing and Ms. Egan, gathered outside D.A. at 7:00 am, filled with a mix of nervousness and anticipation. After a bus ride to Yale University, the teams set off. The intermediate team promptly commenced the preliminary rounds of the competition, while the advanced teams had the opportunity to explore the campus. As the competition commenced, enthusiasm filled the air as our students participated in spirited debates and friendly rivalries with fellow contestants, earning valuable points for our school in the intermediate and advanced divisions. The D.A. teams displayed impressive skill throughout various rounds, reflecting their dedication and hard work in the study of Latin. The excitement was palpable throughout the day as teams engaged in multiple rounds, taking time to explore the beautiful Yale campus between competitions. The atmosphere was alive with enthusiasm as team members rallied behind one another, embodying the spirit of

teamwork and resilience central to our school's values.

The day concluded with an awards ceremony in which teams were honored for their hard work and dedication. Although D.A. did not secure the top prize this year, the team emerged with enhanced skills and renewed enthusiasm, pledging to return even stronger next year. “Overall, it was awesome to gather with like-minded Classics-enthusiasts,” shared Ms. Oing, who is the moderator for the Latin Club. “I’m so proud of our D.A. team for taking the plunge and trying it out.”

The experience not only cultivated a profound appreciation for Latin and Roman history among the students—enabling them to explore the intricate narratives of ancient civilizations, their cultural achievements, and their lasting impact on modern society—but it also played a pivotal role in strengthening the bonds of friendship and collaboration among the participants. By engaging in group activities, spirited discussions, and shared challenges, the students developed a strong sense of camaraderie and teamwork. Plans are already underway for more competitions in the future, including one at Harvard University, as our team strives to train more and continue making its mark in the realm of Latin studies.

Festifall: A Time of Friendship and Caramel Apples

By Elnaz M.

The auditorium was alive with laughter and enthusiasm during this year’s FestiFall. FestiFall is an annual event



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organized by D.A.'s Student Council, where freshmen spend time with their senior sisters with whom they were paired at the beginning of the school year. Many students gathered to sample all the sweet treats, participate in karaoke and Kahoot, and most importantly have lots of fun.

As students entered the auditorium, they first noticed the sugary aroma of the numerous sweet and fall-themed treats. The auditorium had bright red, orange, and yellow tablecloths, leaf decals all around for the fall season, and music everyone loved played in the background. The main attraction, however, was the caramel apples. The scent of warmed caramel filled the room and many students lined up to taste the decadence. Ivanka B., a senior and one of the Student Council Co-Presidents was giving out the caramel apples to everyone. There were many toppings to add to the apples, such as marshmallows, pretzels, M&Ms, and much more.

Another activity that stirred up excitement and students' competitive side was the many Kahoot games! All the games of Kahoot were amusing and everyone was determined to win. The game topics were specifically picked to ensure that everyone could participate. This year, the topics were mainly focused on pop culture—there were questions about the famous TV series *Gilmore Girls* and *Dance Moms* and some questions about celebrities like the Kardashians. The Kahoot games created a lively atmosphere, encouraging participation and friendship as students enjoyed testing their pop culture knowledge.

Students also had the opportunity to sing their hearts out in karaoke during Festifall. The karaoke took place in the MPR instead of the auditorium. Everyone was having a rollicking time singing and stepping out of their comfort zones. Some popular songs were “You Belong With Me” by Taylor Swift and “Beauty and the Beat” by Justin Bieber.

When I asked Ivanka B. how it felt to be part of setting up FestiFall she said, “It's always such a fun and busy time setting up for a Student Council event. But FestiFall was a little more special because most, if not all, members of our Stu-Co brought in homemade baked goods. We were so happy to be able to display the copious amounts of food that we ended up sending food home with people!”

Thanks to the incredible dedication, creativity, and hard work of the Student Council members, FestiFall became a truly unforgettable experience. Everyone had loads of fun either spending time with their friends, meeting new friends, enjoying the taste of the fall treats, singing karaoke, or playing fun games of Kahoot! I believe the best part of FestiFall was talking to my senior sister Eileen W. and tasting all the sweet treats there. This was definitely a thrilling event and a time filled with happiness for the burgeoning fall season.



It's the Most Wonderful Morning of the Year! ~ Sophomore and Junior Breakfast 2024

By Katie B.

Although the end of Thanksgiving break may be disappointing for some, its conclusion ushers in a new beginning: the Christmas season! At D.A., there is no better way to start December than with a holiday breakfast. Like in the past, all Sophomores and Juniors are invited to enjoy a festive breakfast together kindly provided by the school.

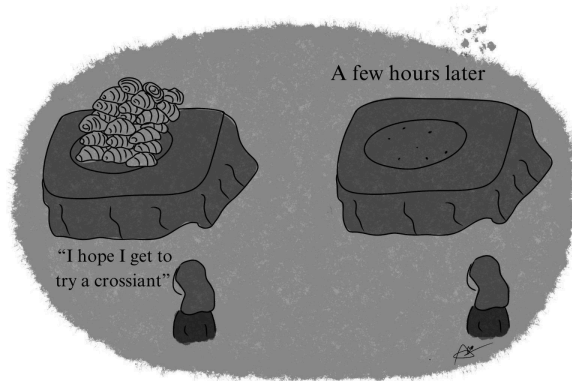


Illustration by Ana D.

As the Sophomores and Juniors entered the building the morning of December 4th, they were welcomed by extraordinary lights and Christmas decorations that stretched all the way up the red stairs and into the auditorium, where the event took place. The auditorium was filled with tables and chairs for students to sit and enjoy their food, chat with others, sing to Christmas music, and watch the featured movie *Elf* on the projector. Outside of the

auditorium, tables were set on each side of the doors, offering a tasty assortment of pastries such as muffins and croissants as well as self-serve hot chocolate with marshmallows.

One of the special things about this annual event is its ability to foster community among students of different classes. Before the morning of the breakfast, Sophomores and Juniors are matched with each other, similar to senior-freshman sisters. The matching is done mostly at random, which allows for students to get to know each other and make new friends. Upon entering the auditorium, it's clear how closely knit the D.A. community is; no student was left out. You could hear the harmonization of students singing *Last Christmas* while sipping on cocoa and munching on blueberry muffins. Everyone was enjoying themselves in the companionship of each other, laughing and sharing warm feelings of comfort and joy.

While it was sad to see the event wrap up, the breakfast was the perfect way to create excitement about the upcoming holidays. After all, how could Christmas not be on your mind after gathering in a D.A. Winter Wonderland!

A Nutcracker Night: D.A.'s Enchanted Christmas Dance

By Vivienne S.

On a chilly and infamous Friday the 13th of December, Dominican Academy transformed into a magical holiday scene for its annual Christmas dance. The upperclassmen stepped into our reimagined school and inspired by the enchanting 1892



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classical ballet *The Nutcracker*. Red and gold accents adorned the MPR, Mezzanine, and Auditorium, with wooden soldiers standing sentinel and bright yellow lights casting a warm, festive glow. For one unforgettable night, the walls of D.A. came alive with the spirit of the season and the timeless charm of Tchaikovsky's masterpiece.

Students and their guests hurried through the metal doors, clicking their heels as they escaped the biting cold and stepped into a night of merry fun. The familiar red-carpeted staircase was transformed, flanked by two towering nutcrackers at its base and draped with golden tulle and twinkling lights along the banister. People gathered at the top of the steps, greeting each other and sharing accolades for the others' dress choices. As the final arrivals trickled in and the DJ cranked up the volume, students became less nervous to spread out and decided to fill the booming dance floor as their nerves grew into excitement. On their way to the Auditorium, they walked past tables covered in red tablecloths with cloudlike "snow" and small nutcrackers at their center. Freshmen graciously manned the drink and snack table, standing guard like nutcrackers themselves. Walking through the tinsel-covered doorway of the Auditorium, students emerged into a dark room illuminated only by the DJ setup and twinkle lights strung across the velvety walls. The room filled with tons of students singing the words to a song, any one voice indistinguishable as they blended into a

jubilant chorus. They jumped up onto their toes and back down to the sound of the beat while forming blisters that seemed inconsequential the moment their favorite musical hit pounded out of the speakers and excited the room all over again. It was a night of dancing and connecting with their friends and a moment to relax and just have some fun. When a breather was needed, the MPR offered a quieter retreat across the stairway. Square tables spread across the floor provided a perfect spot to grab a seat, have a snack, chat with a friend outside the noise, and recharge to run back onto the dance floor when the first note of a recognizable song rings.

Dominican Academy hosts a handful of dances each year, each offering a wonderful night spent in a familiar space with familiar faces. These events bring the D.A. community closer with every shared laugh and sway on the dance floor. This year's Christmas Dance was no exception. The seniors and juniors enjoyed shimmering decorations, heartfelt conversation, and lively dancing – a testament to the creativity and camaraderie of the junior and senior classes and everyone who made the evening possible. On that night, students and their guests became part of a jubilant fairytale, where cold December winds stayed outside, and warmth and laughter filled the rooms of the school. Each individual who attended was left with memories they will treasure long after the music faded.

A special thanks to the student council, Ms. Reardon, the music and decoration committees, the students who set



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up and cleaned, the underclassman for staying during the dance to help with various efforts, and everyone who made the evening possible. Thank you for the special holiday night.

Cookies and Cheer: A Very Merry D.A.P.A. Family Christmas

By Sophie N.

It is December 14th, the time of the year when the holiday season is in full swing in the city, and D.A. is no exception. You are ushered in from the crisp Manhattan air outside and are immediately filled with holiday cheer. Greeting you at the infamous red stairs are lush and magnificent trees adorned with sparkling ornaments, dressed in their very own D.A. skirts as our classic green and black tartan kilts drape the bottom of the trees. As you ascend our crimson stairs, you are fully immersed in a D.A. winter wonderland, as an ensemble of twinkling fairy lights, red and green velvet, and holiday music fill the mezzanine. Guarding the MPR are two nutcrackers, and inside you find an interactive photo booth with silly Santa hats, elf ears, and reindeer sunglasses to remember these precious moments with friends and family. On your way to the Auditorium, you cannot help but look at the delicious hors d'oeuvres D.A.P.A. is serving up. There are refreshing beverages, delicious finger sandwiches, and scrumptious chicken nuggets. The Auditorium is aglow with holiday lights, and our one and only Glee Club prepares to warm families' hearts with seasonal tunes. Above the main attractions on the second floor, the Library is home to a crafting

station where families can make a cute keepsake gnome out of a sock and rice. Down the black stairs, below these festivities, in the cafeteria, there is a cozy hot chocolate station with homemade complimentary cookies and an ornament crafting activity for all to enjoy.



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Drawing by Lauren W.

A D.A.P.A. Family Christmas would not be complete without the tradition of an outstanding performance from Glee Club. This year, a special performance by our very own Senior Ensemble kicked off the choral festivities. The theme of the senior ensemble's performance was "Christmas Nostalgia," as their setlist reflected the bittersweet feelings that come with their final time performing at a D.A.P.A. Family Christmas. The setlist included "Blue Christmas," "The Christmas Song," "I'll Be Home for Christmas," "O' Holy Night," and a performance of "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen" that brought the house down. Mae C. '25, who performed in the senior ensemble, said "It was a beautiful



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arrangement and it was sad to realize this is my last high school Christmas. I cried every time we did “I’ll Be Home for Christmas.” Mae and the senior ensemble are excited to return for the holidays to continue witnessing this classic D.A. tradition as it lives on. Glee Club’s performance followed shortly after and was nothing short of cheerful. The theme for the Glee Club’s performance was *twinkling bells!* The setlist included “Ding Dong Merrily on High,” “Carol of the Bells,” “Silver Bells,” “Mistletoe,” which featured Asha D. ‘25 on the sleigh bells, “Last Christmas” and finally, “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.” As a member of Glee Club myself, it is always an unforgettable experience to see the audience in awe of our hard work and to see their enthusiastic reaction to our carols. As always, both the Senior Ensemble and Glee Club performances were arranged and conducted by our beloved Ms. Mooney.

Staff and faculty were present to celebrate the holidays as part of our D.A. community. Dr. Cagney, Ms. Gibilaro, Sr. Joan Franks O.P., and Mrs. Wieler enjoyed the Christmas festivities firsthand while other teachers watched on Zoom. Of course, this event could not have been possible without the help of Mr. Benigno, Mr. Chen, Mr. Frederick, Ms. Mooney, Dr. Petit, Dr. Egler, and D.A.P.A.!

Glee Club’s New York Athletic Club Serenade

By Lily L.

Though the rainy weather was far from the ideal snow a group of carolers

might hope for, this didn’t stop D.A.’s Glee Club. On December 11th, members of Glee Club plowed their way through Central Park and into the New York Athletic Club, where they spread Christmas cheer in the form of song.

The three-part performance commenced in the NYAC’s Lobby, with its lustrous walls echoing with a symphony of carols. Before Glee Club began their act, Ms. Mooney’s Senior Ensemble graced audience members. Senior Ensemble is composed of a musical foursome almost comparable to the Beatles: seniors Mae C., Olivia C., Asha D., and Angelina P. Their cohesive performances of “I’ll be Home for Christmas,” “Blue Christmas,” “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen,” “The Christmas Song,” and “O Holy Night” brought an air of holiday nostalgia to the audience. “We



decided to choose some sort of bittersweet songs for the Christmas repertoire because this is our last year of spending the full holiday season at home before we leave for



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college next year. And we all are feeling kind of nostalgic,” says Olivia C.

Promptly at the completion of the Senior Ensemble’s repertoire, members of Glee Club began to assemble themselves in front of the circled audience that had accumulated. Their repertoire began with a new favorite, namely, “Ding, Dong Merrily on High.” Though not as much of a seasoned classic as “Silver Bells” or “Last Christmas,” the melodic harmonies and velvety tone of “Ding, Dong Merrily on High” found many people rethinking their favorite holiday tune. “I had never heard of the song before we sang it, but now ‘Ding Dong, Merrily on High’ has become one of my all-time favorite holiday songs. I think we sound really good singing it; there’s a good mix of harmony and vocal synchronization and I like the vibes,” says Mae C. Glee Club’s repertoire consists of: “Carol of the Bells,” “Christmas Jazz,” “Silver Bells,” “Last Christmas,” “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas,” and— a Glee Club mainstay— Justin Bieber’s “Mistletoe.”

After spreading the Christmas cheer once more to a group of spirited members, the NYAC provided Glee Club members with a delectable buffet-style dinner. “I really enjoyed performing at the NYAC. My favorite part was getting to represent D.A. in a very demure setting. I also loved spending quality time with my choir when they provided us with a tasty meal,” says senior Olivia M.

Christmas caroling at the New York Athletic Club has quickly become an annual

Glee Club tradition— when a group of singers as aligned and vibrant as D.A.’s Glee Club sing in an inspiring place such as the NYAC, the Christmas spirit is determinedly contagious.

Mr. Lim: From College Struggles to Teacher at D.A.

By Elnaz M.

This year, freshmen have a substitute Theology teacher, Mr. Lim, filling in for the beloved Ms. Daly. I had the chance to interview him and learn many fascinating things. I’m excited to welcome this new member to the D.A. community.

Mr. Lim was born and raised in Seoul, South Korea, and came to the United States when he was ten years old. He grew up in Valley Stream, Long Island, and said that everyone was very kind and welcoming when he immigrated. As a child in South Korea, Mr. Lim enjoyed going to baseball stadiums to watch games and since then, he has been very fond of the sport. His absolute favorite team was the LG Twins, a professional baseball team in Seoul, South Korea.

Mr. Lim’s journey is an inspiring one. He had to study a new language in a foreign country. He struggled in college, leading him to fail some subjects. Despite this, he never gave up on his dreams. His passion for theology motivated him to continue his education and eventually attend a different college. There, he dedicated himself to studying both theology and philosophy. Through hard work and perseverance, Mr. Lim turned his life around. After completing his studies, he



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found a meaningful path in teaching. He now shares his knowledge and passion with students at Dominican Academy. His story reminds others that setbacks do not define a person's future. Mr. Lim's resilience and determination serve as an example for his students. He proves that it is never too late to follow your dreams.

When asked how he ended up at D.A., Mr. Lim said he saw an ad for this job and decided to take it. He shared that he values the opportunity teaching at D.A. offers to share his faith with others. He admires the rest of the faculty and staff for their kindness and intelligence, and applauds their dedication to the work they do. When I asked Mr. Lim what made him want to be a teacher he said, "I want to appreciate the opportunity to share faith and transmit what God shows us, communicate what God wants to tell us. I want to teach by example instead of making the young generation feel like things are imposed on them."

Mr. Lim also shared with me his typical school day. Three days a week, his day starts at around 4:30 A.M. when he cooks dinner for his parents to have later that night. Mr. Lim said, "I like fixing things to eat for people I love." He described cooking for his parents as a way to communicate his love and gratitude towards them. Then, he gets ready and comes to D.A. bright and early around seven as he hates being late. After work, Mr. Lim said, "I go home and then my mom gives me lunch, like a combination meal depending on what time I get home." In his spare time,

Mr. Lim likes to take walks with his mother and sister when the weather is nice.

I went on to ask Mr. Lim what some of his favorite things were. His favorite ice cream flavor depends on his mood, but he said he prefers white chocolate and raspberry ice cream. How unique! Mr. Lim's favorite movie is *Going My Way*, a heartwarming movie about how a young priest enters a tough neighborhood parish in midtown, Manhattan. He said, "The movie teaches love, respect, and humility." His favorite book is *Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne. The book has a dramatic reversal to it like the Gospel, which Mr. Lim appreciates. He recommends all his students to read the book. When I asked him about who his favorite teacher is he said he has so many to choose from but he noted that a common quality he admired in all of them was their authenticity. Mr. Lim also noted that he is very fond of animals because he believes they are an excellent way to appreciate the vast multitude of God's beautiful creations.

I concluded the interview by asking Mr. Lim what was most exciting about being a member of the D.A. community. He responded, "I am most excited about discussing faith with young people and hearing what they have to say about faith." If you see Mr. Lim in the hallway or in class make him feel welcome to the D.A. community and take a moment to get to know him better.



Getting to Know STUCO

By Nora W.

Student Council (STUCO) is one of the most important clubs at D.A. They represent the students by relaying student concerns to the faculty and administration and also creating fun school activities to build our community. I had the opportunity to talk to our STUCO presidents, Annie M., '25 and Ivanka B., '25, whose cheery voices you hear each morning during homeroom announcements, about their own lives in and outside of D.A..

Q: [Annie](#), first things first, what are your favorite classes at D.A.? Do you take any APs? If so, which ones?

A: World History, AP World, APUSH, and AP Gov have been my favorite classes; I've realized that history and government are passions of mine. I find it so interesting to talk about what happened in the past and then compare it to what is happening today—we can see so many patterns in humanity's decisions. Likewise, Theology has been a favorite subject of mine, particularly Church History with Dr. Gowans and Christian Ethics with Dr. Cagney.

As a senior, I take four APs: Biology, Government, Psychology, and Literature. My APs are some of my favorite classes this year. I chose to take all of them so they're all subjects that excite and challenge me which I love. It's especially fun because many of my AP teachers are teachers I had in previous years.

Q: [Annie](#), what is your favorite memory of D.A.? Why?

A: Some people in my grade organized a senior sunrise for the Class of 2025 before school started this year and that was a special event. It was lovely to be together as a grade right before the start of senior year. I think any time that my whole grade got time to be together is a really special memory to me, they all mean so much to me and I know it's going to be hard to say goodbye.

Q: [Ivanka](#), do you participate in any activities in or outside of school? How do they shape who you are?

A: I have definitely tried to keep myself busy in and outside of school by getting involved in an array of activities. Social equality and DEI are super important to me, and I think my extracurriculars are an accurate reflection of that. I am the Co-President of one of DA's newer clubs, First Generation Immigrant Youth Advocacy (FIYA), and on the board of the SOCA. I also run my own non-profit organization outside of school: TCD Giving. With the help of volunteers, we have been able to raise thousands of dollars and donate over 500 homemade Indian meals to places like Syracuse, Kinnelon, N.J., N.Y.C., Hoboken, and the Hamptons. Along with DEI, I have always had a passion for being a veterinarian and intern at a local clinic in Hoboken. Other than that, you'll always find me doing little things around D.A. as I am a part of DAPs, Campus Ministry, and a Student Ambassador.

Q: [Ivanka](#), what is something that D.A. has taught you?

A: Along with time management, D.A. has taught me the importance of persistence and



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the results of effective leadership. Now, I am always planning out my day, making me feel very productive (whether I get to everything or not). There are so many ways that persistence is displayed at D.A. because initiative is what clubs and activities are built around here at D.A. And finally, it has taught me how to be an effective leader in all that I do. Whether it be working well as a team member in a group project or planning the Walkathon for D.A. and Regis, it all circles back to effectiveness.

Q: [Ivanka](#), what responsibilities do you have as a STUCO officer?

A: As a Co-President, I am in charge of homeroom announcements, planning Festifall, Spring Fling, Christmas Dance, Culture Day, Spirit Week, and Walkathon, to name a few. Along with these, we are constantly thinking of new ideas and improvements for our student body to thrive. Last year, we were able to install free menstrual supplies in all bathrooms, did something for World Kindness Day, and gave out St. Patty's themed candy grams! We have a few exciting things coming up this year, too, so keep checking your email because we wouldn't want you to miss it!

Unveiling the Senior Retreat: A Journey of Reflection and Connection

By Lily L.

The unyielding secrecy D.A. upperclassmen hold about class retreats adds to the immersive, meaningful experience of these retreat days. So, in an attempt to not reveal too many of the spellbinding details

of this customary grade-bonding event, I will discuss the impact many seniors felt in regard to this retreat rather than the activities surrounding the event itself.



This fact is not bound to secrecy: The senior retreat takes place at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception on Long Island. The sheer look of the place invites reflection. In addition to high marble walls decorated with beautiful crucifixes and images of clergy members, there are various radiant chapels— each intricately designed with biblical depictions in stained glass windows and celestial Latin inscriptions. “When we attended a service in one of the chapels and had time to reflect in our journals, I felt more connected to myself and God than I have in a while. The energy in the seminary seemed to open me up spiritually in an inexplicable way,” says senior Mae C.

The guest rooms invite reflection in a different way. The walls aren't filled with divine and magnificent artwork. Rather, the walls are completely bare apart from a small, simple crucifix. The bed and



bathroom are similarly minimal— this simplicity and plainness invites inward reflection by removing all excess and material luxury. “The first time I came to the seminary, I was surprised to see how empty and bare the rooms were. But this really did allow me to reflect in a deeper, more intimate way. It allowed me to truly be grateful for what I have and just be alone with my thoughts for once,” says Ella C. ‘25.

In addition to the senior retreat’s ability to connect one more deeply to oneself, it also connects one more deeply with classmates. “I love the fact that we go into small groups and have the option to open up to classmates. It connects me to people I never thought I shared so many similarities with,” says senior Emily M. Retreat has a way of forming unlikely



relationships between classmates, and connections on such an emotional and unfiltered level generate some of the most genuine bonds.

Although an ample amount of retreat time is spent alone in reflection, many come out of the retreat feeling significantly less alone than they did at the beginning. So, to any underclassman wishing to know how to best prepare for the cryptic and seemingly unique retreat experiences in your future, my advice is to be open and allow yourself to become vulnerable; you never know the meaningful insights to which it could lead you.

SPORTS ROUNDUP

Swimming For Her Future: Emilianna Goes D1

By Annie M.

My first memory of Emilianna was at freshman year swim tryouts. The team was gathered outside our practice pool and a tall girl with a big red swim bag and glasses came up and quietly loitered a little bit away from the chattering swimmers. She was so quiet, in fact, I don’t think much of the team was even aware she was there. When it came time for her tryout, she was racing against our two captains, seniors who were both seasoned athletes. She handily beat both of them. This perfectly illustrates what makes Emilianna so special. I have never met someone so humble and yet so gifted. She never wants much attention on her, she just wants to go out and swim her best. But, unfortunately for her, when Emilianna gets



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in the water, you can't help but pay attention to her every stroke.

For the last four years, Emilianna has dominated the GCHSAA swim league: She currently holds the record for the 50-yard freestyle, tied the record for the 100-yard freestyle, and won the Millie Travers Award last year for being the highest-scoring individual swimmer at the "A" Championships. Swimmers from other teams know her, and they congratulate her heartily and sincerely when they see her on deck. This year, a coach from another team



shyly asked if she could take a picture with Emilianna. She wanted a picture with a future Olympian. Throughout all of these accomplishments, Emilianna has remained herself. She supports her teammates

passionately, pushing them to be the best they can be, and this year as captain, leading with poise and kindness.

Outside of swimming for D.A., she's also been making waves. Most recently, she placed 20th in the nation at Junior Nationals for the 50-yard freestyle, racing against the top recruits in the country. Because of these astounding accomplishments, her discipline, and her strength of character, Emilianna was recruited by Rutgers University, a Division 1 school. When asked, Emilianna said she's excited at the opportunities for growth that Division 1 swimming will provide her, such as first-rate facilities, coaches, and intense competition. Rutgers has one of the country's most competitive and respected women's swimming programs, and there is no doubt that Emilianna will continue to shine as a Scarlet Knight, just as she did as a D.A. tiger.



To celebrate this outstanding accomplishment, D.A. hosted a signing party for Emilianna and her family. Her teammates along with their families, Coach Kristin and Coach Brendan, D.A. faculty and staff, and many more came to support Emilianna. So many people showed up that



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there weren't enough chairs for everyone. Coach Kristin, Mrs. Sullivan, and Emilianna herself all gave short yet touching speeches, marking this momentous occasion. And of course, no party is complete without cake and sparkling cider.

Surrounded by loved ones, teammates, and supporters, proudly wearing a scarlet Rutgers sweatshirt over her uniform, Emilianna signed the paperwork that officially makes her a member of the Rutgers Women's Swim Team and a member of the Rutgers class of 2029.



Claire's Commitment to Colgate: A Celebration of Accomplishments By Caroline I.

On December 11th, friends, teammates, teachers, and our beloved Coach Jen came together, eager to celebrate the signing ceremony of senior Claire S. to Colgate University. Claire, the co-captain and fastest runner on the D.A. cross-country and track teams, proudly wore the red "C" on her hat as she smiled from ear to ear, listening to the speeches from those who have been guiding her through this process, such as Coach Jen and Mrs. Sullivan.

From hearing her name during announcements seemingly every other week about her races to hearing her laugh echo across the room, Claire is a symbol of energy at D.A. If you ask anyone about Claire, they will always say she lights up any room she is in, enthusiastically engaging in whatever she is involved. Claire has brought this attitude to every practice, showing up to each and every run, ready to lead and give it her all. It is this mindset and determination that has propelled her to Colgate, where we know she will continue to succeed both on and off the track.



Claire's achievements have consistently wowed D.A., from her 3000-meter performances that brought her to the state championship meet to her top three performances at cross country meets. Her efforts to always achieve personal records show, and they are now so deservedly recognized at the highest level!

As someone who has had the privilege of being one of Claire's closest friends, I can attest to the countless late nights, long runs, and stretching



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(sometimes) that Claire has put in to arrive at this point. Not only is she an amazing runner, but also a student who puts that same perseverance into her studies. Claire has always sought to give every endeavor her all—an attribute that many can look up to and younger runners, athletes, and students at D.A. undoubtedly admire.

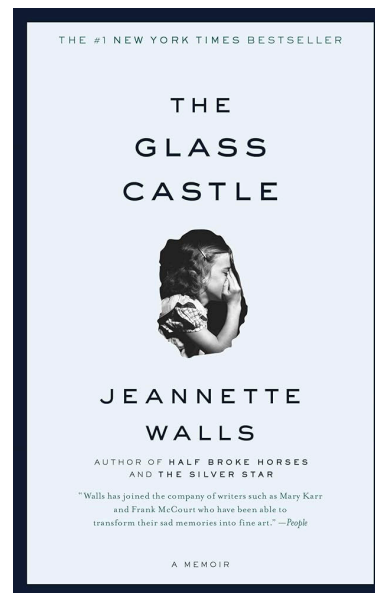
In her role as a student-athlete at Colgate, she is excited to continue this dedication. Claire plans to major in neuroscience, with a future goal to become a neuropsychologist. As Claire prepares for the transition to college during the following few months, the D.A. community looks forward to encouraging Claire in her races as she continues guiding the team in earning their PRs, too. Congratulations, Claire! We are so proud of you.



COLUMNS

Book Review: A Magical Memoir - The Glass Castle

By Ana D.



Book of the Issue: *The Glass Castle* by Jeannette Walls

Rating :

The Glass Castle, the quintessential emotional memoir, is an unforgettable reading experience. Since this story's release in 2005, it has created a golden standard, inspiring others to recognize the novel-worthy lives they live. The story follows Jeannette Walls, the author, and second oldest child of a struggling West Virginian family of four who are always on the move, or “doing the skedaddle” until they return to a town from which it seems impossible to escape. Her childhood is full of the ordinary imagination and happiness of








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a child, although born into an unconventional family. At a young age, she is faced with the hardships of an adult, money struggles, and racial dynamics. The Walls children, although they were loved by their parents who supported their dreams, were consistently let down by them when it mattered most. In Jeannette Walls' sensational story, her siblings realize that they must learn how to escape this cycle of broken promises from their alcoholic father, although a genius when sober, and resentful mother, who had to choose her children over her art.

While reading this novel, I tried to delay the inevitable end. The book lay on my bedside for days, the last chapter stayed unread until the last minute. When I finally read the end of *The Glass Castle*, I was practically tearing up. Ms. Walls writes in such a way that you are transported every time you open the cover, and must constantly remind yourself that it is a memoir and not a work of fiction. Her experiences are beautiful but heart-wrenching, and you will find yourself rooting for her during her tragedies. I genuinely enjoyed reading Jeannette Walls' story of *The Glass Castle*, and hope that those looking for an exquisite read will find themselves a copy.

Legend

-  - Life-changing story, exceptional imagery, impactful narrative
 -  - Great book, interesting and compelling
 -  - Average, nothing particularly noticeable, ordinary reading
 -  - experience
 -  - Would not recommend, something fell short
- Boring, could not be more glad to be finished with it

Let me know if you have any comments or book recommendations by emailing me at adelgado2026@dominicanacademy.org.

A Dash of Happiness and a Sprinkle of Gratitude

By Melissa B.

As the apple and cherry sparkling cider was dug out from the fridge and poured into flutes, the 12 grapes were laid out on the coffee table, and my mom and I squished onto the couch on New Year's Eve, I was giddy for a fresh start in the New Year. After the clock struck midnight (and I sang my rendition of Frank Sinatra's *Theme from New York, New York*, complete with a one-woman kick line), business was set. January 1 would begin my plan: Operation New Year. I would do all of the classic New Year's resolutions; work out, read more, eat healthy, and study hard. January 1 came and went, spent in front of the TV watching the entire *Odd Couple* marathon. But as the calendar flipped to 2025, I realized that there were two things I was missing in my New Year's resolution: gratitude and happiness.

This January marks one year without my grandmother. Losing her was a huge



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mental bump. She was one of my rocks, always there for me, all the way from Long Island. Everyone says that the first year without a loved one is the hardest. They were not kidding. Even the smallest mention of one of my grandmother's many funny one-liners made me miss her terribly. Some days, the pain of missing her dulls a bit, but it's always there.



Melissa and her beloved grandmother

This holiday season, especially Christmas, felt strange to me. For my entire life, she made the holidays bright. She had that effect on everyone with whom she had a connection. The light from the star atop our Christmas tree paled in comparison to the bright smile I had when she came for dinner. The first Christmas without her loomed over our family. My mother unknowingly put out

an extra dinner set, not remembering that Grandma really was not there.

Even though I write a column on gratitude and happiness, it can be challenging to follow through sometimes. Amidst missing her and wanting to just pick up the phone to hear her voice, I lost sight of all of the happy memories I had with her. I forgot that though I still missed her, I had to be grateful for the time I spent with her. I had to be happy with the fact that now she is in a better place. I know that I will always want more time with her, want her to see all of the accomplishments I had this past year and all of the future ones to come. But, looking back, she will always be in my heart, sending me her love from beyond. The beautiful winter sunsets, the raucous family laughs, and all of the "small" moments are just her peaking through, telling me that she's still there. And I truly have to be happy and grateful for that!

I hope that your Christmas Break was full of rest, family, fun, and the joys of the season. I will be back next month to report on your good news. Be on the lookout for my email with a [link](#) to submit your good news. Until then, make sure to add a Dash of Happiness and a Sprinkle of Gratitude to your life!

Upper Eats Side - Food Review: Sojourn

By Vivienne S.

Rating:

Happy New Year Upper Eats Siders and welcome to the first restaurant review of 2025. I am delighted to be continuing to



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write the column another year and provide you with my opinions on the yums and yucks of the Upper East Side's restaurant scene. "Sojourn" signifies a temporary stay, but my visit to this delightful spot was anything but fleeting. It was a lovely experience and I found myself wishing for more time to savor it. Nestled at the corner of 79th Street and 2nd Avenue, Sojourn exudes charm. With its vibrant wine bar and a chic, cabin-inspired ambiance highlighted by warm oak and deep red tones, it offers a cozy, inviting setting that's perfect for a memorable evening meal. This New American restaurant with globally influenced dishes proves you don't need to travel far from our red and gold home for a short and pleasant stay.

Stepping in from the blistering cold wind and through a wooden arched door, I was surrounded by the warmth and welcoming ambiance of the room. The first sight was the striking copper-covered bar, leading seamlessly into a dining area designed for comfort and intimacy. Sojourn opens at 4:30 PM on weekdays, with a tempting brunch offered from 12:00 to 4:00 PM on Saturdays and Sundays. The space was empty except for one other seated table when we arrived at opening, but slowly started filling with guests as the clock clicked. The homey, inviting atmosphere thawed my chilled hands and awakened my appetite. We sat at a wooden corner table with soft cushioned benches and accompanying dark brown throw pillows creating a comforting space. This month's

restaurant choice is not a high-end option but a casual place to enjoy a warm meal.

Now comes the unfortunate part of why this visit didn't earn all the coveted Tiger tokens. While the food was exquisite, as I'll happily share later, the initial service left much to be desired. With only a handful of customers present, the man who seemed to be the manager greeted and seated us. At first, his friendly and outgoing demeanor was promising, but it quickly turned unprofessional. After a rushed introduction, he darted off the moment we mentioned needing more time with the menu. When I looked over to see why he was doing a 100-meter sprint to the back in between questioning tables, he was sitting down at a table in the back, eating one of the restaurant's dishes and looking at his phone. And while I concede that the food did look delicious and no one likes eating a cold plate, I would expect him to be more concerned about what food was going to be served to us rather than what was already served to him. His priority was altogether out of place, especially since he was the only person managing the floor at the time. His pacing around was distracting and concerning. The restaurant had just opened for the night prior to our arrival and it seemed as though he had already checked out for the evening. When my guests and I finally decided on our order, he returned, leaned casually against a wall near the table, and listened to our requests. To my amusement, he edged away as we explained our requests as though he were being pulled back to his meal. I took a second glance at



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his dish in the back to make sure it wasn't growing legs and running away since he was so concerned to check up on it. He was like a child trying to see just how fast he could put all the dishes away to get back to his room in time for round two of a video game. He listened to our order, with no pen or pad in hand. And just as I was about to congratulate him on his excellent memory he returned several minutes later with an apology and to say that he had forgotten most of the order. We gladly repeated our order and waited. Thankfully, the situation improved. In the meantime, the place started filling up and more staff arrived to assist. A young woman took over our table, and another server brought our food in a perfectly reasonable time. From that point on, the service was wonderful. The manager had his dinner, and I finally got mine.



For starters, we chose the butternut squash and kale salad, topped with candied pecans, goat cheese, and pear slices. The combination was exceptional: The sweetness

and crunch of the pecans, the juiciness of the pear, and the creaminess of the crumbly goat cheese melded beautifully with the tender squash. Tossed in a champagne vinaigrette, this salad is a delightful choice. We also ordered manchego and chorizo croquettes and calamari to complement the salad. The calamari was a standout, with a thin, flavorful breading and perfectly cooked texture—soft without the dreaded rubbery chew that often ruins the dish. The croquettes, while very promising, fell short. The pairing of manchego cheese and chorizo was inspired, but the execution missed the mark. The ratio of ingredients leaned too heavily on the potato filling, making the chorizo hard to find—as if I were playing a game of “Where’s Waldo” with the sausage pieces when I cut it in half. Similarly, the typically bold manchego flavor was covered, leaving the dish feeling unbalanced for the most part. For the entrée, my guest opted for the skirt steak, marinated in soy and served on scallion fried rice. The steak was a triumph—seared nicely and cooked to a precise medium as requested. Each bite was tender and rich, with the soy marinade enhancing the natural flavors and the lightly charred exterior adding depth. The meat melted in my mouth, coating my tongue with each deep flavor. The scallion fried rice was equally impressive. The grains of rice were not overcooked so as to become dry and a good amount of scallions were added. It was very flavorful and paired nicely with the warm steak. Both carefully attended elements of the dish combined to create a hearty meal and something I would surely



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

consider ordering when visiting this location. I ordered the short rib brisket burger, a recent addition to the restaurant's menu. It features their signature sauce and comes with hand-cut fries and a side of ginger ketchup. The rib brisket patty was again cooked to a perfect medium, with a pink center that released juices that coated my fingers when I squished it between the surrounding bun. The meat was accompanied by lettuce, tomato, pickles, caramelized onions, and cheddar, with an optional addition of bacon for extra indulgence. The caramelized onions provided a delightful sweetness that was perfectly balanced by the tangy, salty features of the dill pickles. Their signature sauce added a creamy, flavorful layer that complemented the burger while keeping the bun moist. Achieving a balance of ingredients is key to crafting a great burger, and this one nailed it. The hand-cut fries, though slightly overcooked, were clearly made in-house and paired well with the unique ginger ketchup, which added a subtle zing and was different from the usual condiment. Overall, the burger was a satisfying and well-executed choice, showcasing the restaurant's attention to detail and creative decisions in classic dishes.



All in all, Sojourn was a great visit with many fulfilling and delicious meals and an intimate atmosphere. Despite the manager's hunger leaving a chilly impression, the warmth of the staff who stepped in later and the undeniable quality of the food more than redeemed the evening. The kitchen was consistently surpassing my expectations. The culinary craft spoke louder than the hiccups, making it a spot worth revisiting for its magnetic charm and versatile menu.



Legend

-  - extraordinary food, brilliant service, top tier interior design, close location, and clean
-  - tasty food, good service, pleasing interior, accessible location
-  - subpar food, mediocre service, harder to reach area, and little originality
-  - disorganized and uninspired food selection
-  - inedible food, unclean environment, and discourteous service

Student Prints Wrapped

By Elizabeth M.

2024 was a year of incredible music. From Childish Gambino’s comeback album dropped in the middle of “brat” summer to “Cowboy Carter’s” command of the country genre, to countless reunion tours and albums released over the last year, listeners worldwide were exposed to brand new sounds and songs we will always remember.

The year started out strong on January 19th, when Green Day released “Saviors.” After backlash from their previous album “Father of All…” for being too poppy and a deviation from the band’s classic pop-punk sound, Green Day was able to pump out a fifteen-song rock album nominated for three Grammy Awards. Two months later - you know her, you love her - Beyoncé released “Cowboy Carter.” The album both expanded the country genre to female artists of color and racked up another eleven Grammy Award nominations, making Beyoncé the most nominated artist in Grammy history. Also atop the Grammy nominations was Pearl Jam’s April release, “Dark Matter.” The band released

“Wreckage” and “Running” ahead of the full drop, and while neither of these singles received any of the three nominations for “Dark Matter,” the album earned Pearl Jam’s first nominations in fourteen years.

While many music fans around the world are still waiting for their favorite band’s reunion albums, 2024 saw some of the best comeback albums in musical history. After two years of recovering his singing voice and working on the band’s stage presence, the New Jersey icon Bon Jovi released “Forever” in June of 2024. The band first released the single “Legendary” in March, and the success of this song was accompanied by frontman Jon Bon Jovi being named the 2024 MusiCares Person of the Year. Just a month later, after a seven-year hiatus and break from the Childish Gambino character, comedian and singer Donald Glover released “Bando Stone and the New World” in July, and if the shock of a new album was not enough for fans, Glover announced it would be the soundtrack to his upcoming film of the same name.

While the winner and nominees of the Best New Artist of 2024 are all very talented musicians, including Jelly Roll, Gracie Abrams, Noah Kahan, and Ice Spice, my Best New Artist of 2024 was not on this list, rather he was setting up his tripod in the woods and recording his debut album on your For You page. His name is Jesse Welles, an Arkansas native armed with a guitar and a bone to pick with the state of our world. Released on the Fourth of July, “Hells Welles” is a gritty, folksy, reality



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check with more than three million streams. The instrumentals are catchy and will have you doing a little dance on your first listen, but as you start paying closer attention to his lyrics on “War Isn’t Murder,” “Cancer,” and almost every song, that boogie will likely stop once you realize the biting comments Welles makes in this album.

As January 2025 kicks off a new year of spectacular albums on the way, I want to recap my top songs of 2024. These songs may not be as popular as your “club classics” and “Like Him,” but these five songs are some of my favorites of the year and will be seen on my AirPods account for a very long time.

1. “Dilemma” by Green Day
2. “War Isn’t Murder” by Jesse Welles
3. “Wreckage” by Pearl Jam
4. “That’s How I’m Feeling” by Jack White
5. “Living Proof” by Bon Jovi

Beyond the Canvas: More Than Expected - Unraveling the Bayeux Tapestry

By Mariel R.



Bayeux Tapestry. ca. 1070. Tapestry. Musée de la Tapisserie de Bayeux, Bayeux, France

The Bayeux Tapestry, most likely embroidered by skilled Anglo-Saxon women as surmised due to its expert embroidery, is one of the most important artworks in existence. Almost 1000 years old, the embroidered wool-on-linen construction is miraculously still intact, and because of its pristine condition, this seemingly regular object serves as a primary source for understanding medieval life.

The tapestry includes a plethora of scenes, 75 in total, that are depicted on 230 feet of linen 20 inches high. The Latin inscriptions that appear above continue throughout the tapestry and are known as “tituli.” The tituli reveal the Latin language as that of the educated upper class in this time period, providing information about the historical events depicted and the patron of the tapestry, Bishop Odo of Bayeux.

The knowledge relayed by the tapestry does not end there, however, as the scene above chronicles events relative to the Battle of Hastings. The Battle of Hastings in 1066 was the last battle of the Norman Conquest in which William the Conqueror, Duke of Normandy, gained the English throne. The tapestry’s historical merit goes beyond this as it also depicts mundane objects, typical clothing, food preparation, and even battle preparation in the 11th century, therefore revealing a great deal about the way these people lived.

In addition to its historical merit, the tapestry serves as propaganda glorifying the Normans relative to their English counterparts. Such an object may seem very simple but it truly is so complex and



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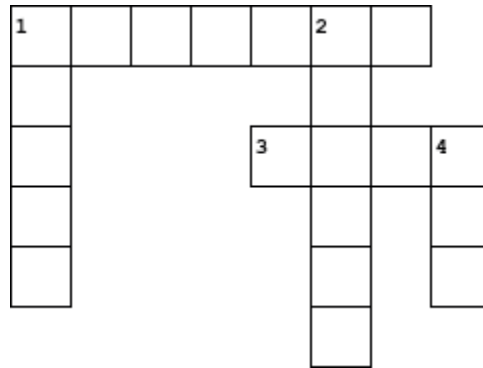
historically special that it absolutely fascinates. If ever in Bayeux, I certainly

would recommend going to see this work in the Bayeux Tapestry Museum.



DoMINican Crossword - Christmas Characters

By Maisie A. and Lily L.



Across

- 1 “Bah Humbug”
- 3 Three men who are...

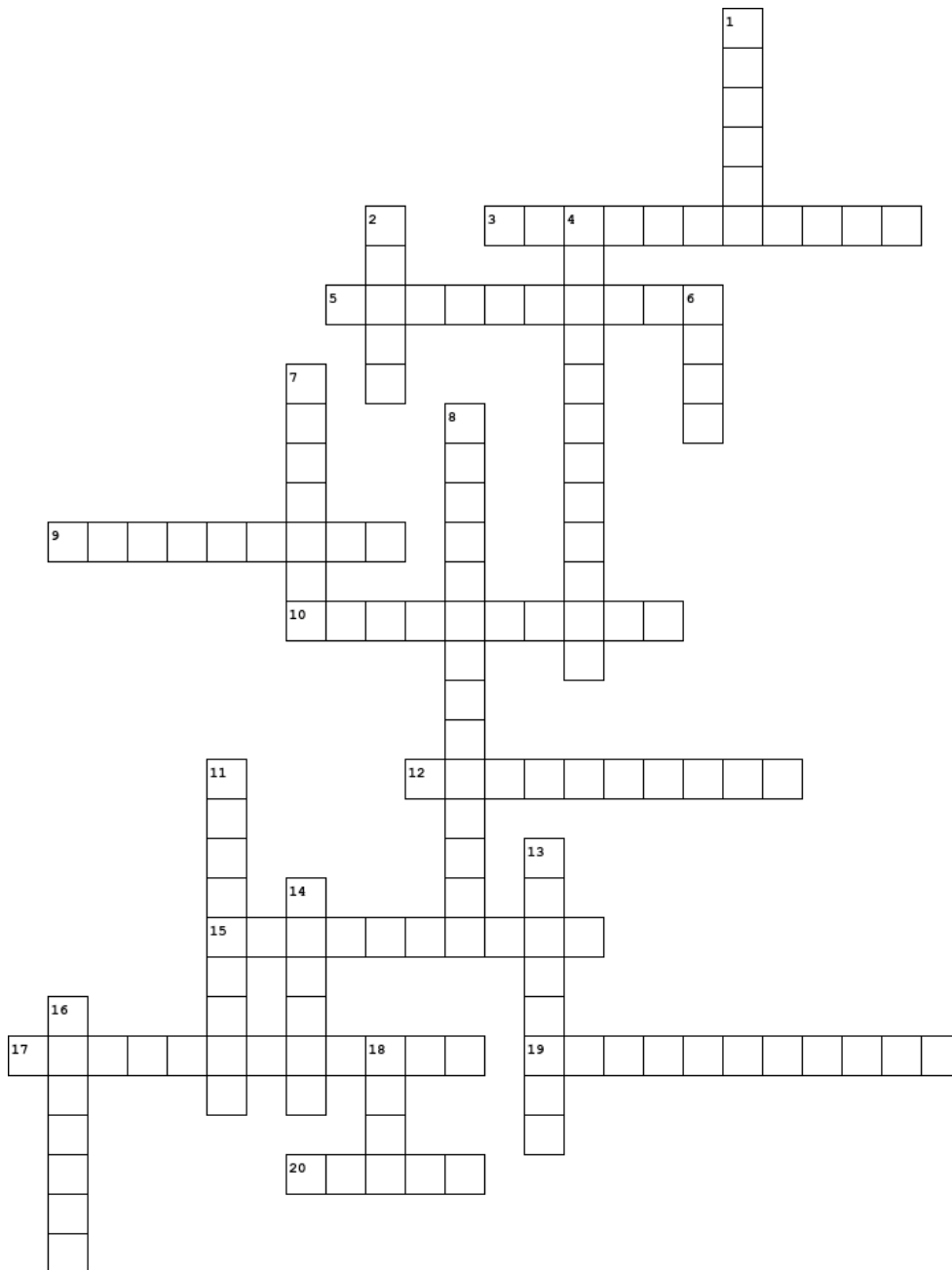
Down

- 1 Ho Ho Ho!
- 2 Green grump
- 4 Santa’s little helper



Holi(D.A.)ys Crossword

By Maisie A. and Lily L.





Holi(D.A.)ys Crossword

1. This year, the Glee Club– along with this other D.A. choir– performed Christmas Carols at the NYAC.
2. To ring in the Christmas Season, D.A.'s Pre-Med society made these.
3. This year, students were able to send holiday spirited messages to their friends in the form of this.
4. This year's Christmas Dance, for the senior and junior classes, was themed for this classic holiday show.
5. Ms. Egan and her Theatre Troupe performed an interpretation of this work of Shakespeare for the D.A. community.
6. On our first day back to school after break, we were welcomed with this whimsical weather.
7. December 25th
8. As a tribute to the graduating class of 2025, seniors got the chance to order “senior sweatshirts” of this theme
9. D.A. 's Annual Family Christmas Party, which has quickly become a staple of the holiday season, was hosted on this day of December.
10. New year goals
11. D.A.'s Glee Club performed this many times during the season....
12. To bring students into a more relaxed mindset for approaching midterms, Ms. Finlayson led students in this form of body movement the week before.
13. D.A. students were provided with this cozy drink on the last day of school before winter break.
14. In classes leading up to the holiday break, Ms. Finlayson focused her dance lessons for the senior class on this form of dance– commonly associated with the holiday season.
15. “Bah Humbug”



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16. Most notable “who” character
17. Leader of Santa’s sleigh
18. Bringer of icy weather
19. Frosty creation with a carrot nose
20. Tree topper



Holi(D.A.)ys Crossword

21. This year, the Glee Club– along with this other D.A. choir– performed Christmas Carols at the NYAC.
 - a. SENIORENSEMBLE
22. To ring in the Christmas Season, D.A.'s Pre-Med society made these.
 - a. SHRINKYDINKS
23. This year, students were able to send holiday spirited messages to their friends in the form of this.
 - a. CANDYGRAMS
24. This year's Christmas Dance, for the senior and junior classes, was themed for this classic holiday show.
 - a. NUTCRACKER
25. Ms. Egan and her Theatre Troupe performed an interpretation of this work of Shakespeare for the D.A. community.
 - a. JULIUSCAESAR
26. On our first day back to school after break, we were welcomed with this whimsical weather.
 - a. SNOW
27. December 25th
 - a. CHRISTMAS
28. As a tribute to the graduating class of 2025, seniors got the chance to order “senior sweatshirts” of this theme
 - a. SUBWAY
29. D.A. 's Annual Family Christmas Party, which has quickly become a staple of the holiday season, was hosted on this day of December.
 - a. FOURTEENTH
30. New year goals
 - a. RESOLUTIONS



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31. D.A.'s Glee Club performed this many times during the season...
 - a. THREE
32. To bring students into a more relaxed mindset for approaching midterms, Ms. Finlayson led students in this form of body movement the week before.
 - a. MEDITATION
33. D.A. students were provided with this cozy drink on the last day of school before winter break.
 - a. HOTCOCOA
34. In classes leading up to the holiday break, Ms. Finlayson focused her dance lessons for the senior class on this form of dance– commonly associated with the holiday season.
 - a. BALLET
35. “Bah Humbug”
 - a. SCROOGE
36. Most notable “who” character
 - a. CINDYLOUWHO
37. Leader of Santa’s sleigh
 - a. RUDOLPH
38. Bringer of icy weather
 - a. JACKFROST
39. Frosty creation with a carrot nose
 - a. SNOWMAN
40. Tree topper
 - a. STAR



DoMINICan Crossword - Christmas Characters

1. Ho Ho Ho!
 - a. SANTA
2. Green grump
 - a. GRINCH
3. Santa's little helper
 - a. ELF
4. The heroine of *The Nutcracker*
 - a. CLARA
5. Three men who are.....
 - a. WISE



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D.A. in Photos Claire S.'s Signing



Midterm Week Puppies!





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Emilianna G.'s Signing



Dominic About D.A.





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Meet Evan! The Latest Addition to the D.A. Family



Cross Country Team at Federation



Varsity Tennis Seniors



Varsity Volleyball Seniors





St. Patrick's Day Parade Award

