

# The Dumb Ox

## March 2025



### Aquinas On Stage

By: Katherine Repasky

On February 13th Aquinas students took the stage at the Pittsburgh Public Theater for the annual Shakespeare Competition! This event has become a beloved tradition at the school for many years. This year, 87 students from grades 5-12 participated. This competition provides a great platform for students to be creative, showcase their talents, and have fun with their friends.

The competition is divided into two divisions, one featuring students from grades 4-7 and the other comprising students from grades 8-12. Students select a scene from any Shakespeare play they wish to perform. Performances range from monologues to groups of two through six.

#### Editors

Anne Dolan

Alice Rothfus

#### Publisher

Sam McGowan

#### Writers

Caitlyn Abbett

Madison Bradley

Brynn Burnsworth

Lucy Flynn

Jack Hoerster

Abigail Irvin

Ashlin Knox

Felicity Koble

Claire McMann

Katherine Repasky

Alexa Risdon

Julianna Shemer

Laila Tuffiash

#### Guest Writer

Clara Yuo

Middle school participant Abby Mitros reflected on her group's participation saying, "It was a really fun experience that we are all glad to have had the opportunity to participate in." From the many great participants, 12 performances earned Honorable Mentions, which places them among the top 50 participating groups. One group of six high school students, Patrick Richthammer, Jonah Burchill, Timothy Crawford, Linus Burchill, Aurora Predis, and Annette Bentivegna, truly impressed judges with their scene from *The Comedy of Errors*, receiving a callback to participate in the Showcase of Finalists!

Beyond the thrill of performance, the competition also offers students valuable opportunities for personal and academic growth. Participants develop public speaking skills, build confidence, and engage creatively with Shakespeare's characters. Mrs. Mullican, the coordinator of the competition for Aquinas, emphasized its lasting impact, stating, "The energy surrounding the competition continues to grow each year, especially at the middle school level. I am grateful for the enthusiastic performers and dedicated coaches."

To prepare for the performance, students work closely with a teacher as their acting coach. The coach guides them in refining their performances and encourages them to use their creative strengths in different ways. When asked about his coaching experience, Mr. Malchano humorously remarked that he had coached "a long time ago" but had yet to be asked again. Mrs. Meland also expressed her optimism for being a coach for many years now, "It's so fun being able to see the young performers develop a character and bring it to life."

The annual Shakespeare competition continues to be a cherished event at Aquinas Academy, providing students each year with a new chance to grow as performers and scholars. Ari Buchanan reflected on her experience of performing at both the grade school and high school level sharing "Performing in fifth grade felt exhilarating, like being on Broadway, however doing it again in high school seemed less intimidating and made me realize how much I had grown on stage!" With its blend of creativity and education, the competition remains a highlight of the school year. If you are interested in trying something new, the annual Shakespeare competition is definitely something to consider.



# A Mysterious Theft: Mock Trial Steals County Three-Peat

By: Clara Yuo

The Aquinas Academy Mock Trial Team has become accustomed to winning. On March 13th, the team defeated Mount Lebanon in the County Finals, winning their third straight Allegheny County Championship and completing a three-year undefeated streak in county competition.

A Mock Trial team consists of three attorneys and three witnesses. However, all schools must prepare both a prosecution team and defense team. This year's case is a Grand Larceny charge. Senior Lucy Fowler plays the defendant, a college student accused of stealing a \$20,000 diamond necklace. For the prosecution, junior Luke Crawford plays the police officer, who leads the case against the defendant.

The team started their season on a high note, with Aquinas' two teams placing fourth and fifth respectively at the Pitt Tournament Invitational in January. This was the best outcome at the Pitt Tournament in team history. It was also the largest roster in Aquinas history, with twenty-three students participating. Of those twenty-three, nearly half were underclassmen, which bodes well for the team's future.

This year's team boasts a strong cast of returning seniors. Some, including attorneys J.J. Ortiz and Anne Dolan, have held starting roles on the county team for several years. Others, such as Mary Osburg, are experiencing county competition for the first time. Mary said, "I always thought Mock Trial was just fake lawyers in a stuffy courtroom, but it is so much more exciting. As a witness, you get to play a character, where half of what you say is improvised." The county team is rounded out by senior attorney Clara Yuo, senior witnesses Brynn Burnsworth, Alice Rothfus and Enzo Flati, and senior timekeeper Sam McGowan.

Having defeated teams including Allderdice High School and Eden Christian Academy in the county competition, the team now prepares for states. County champions advance to the state tournament in Harrisburg, where they represent Allegheny County against the top fourteen Mock Trial teams in Pennsylvania. The team is very excited to return to Harrisburg for a third straight year. Senior Anne Dolan shared, "I'm excited to see where we end up. It's super special having an almost entirely senior team, and it's a great last hurrah." Mr. Malchano shares the team's excitement, stating, "I think it's great for [them] to be able to do this."

Although the team will miss its strong class of seniors, it also looks forward to an exciting future, with a large group of underclassmen eager for new roles next year. Freshman Allie Swift said, "I am so sad to see the seniors go, especially since I have learned so much from them!" The Aquinas community hopes that the seniors will have great success at the State competition, cementing Aquinas Mock Trial's winning tradition.



## A Retreat of Fellowship

By: Brynn Burnsworth



Every year juniors and seniors have the opportunity to attend a spring retreat known as "Koinonia." This four day-long retreat is focused solely on building your relationship with God, and it has had an impact on multiple students' lives.

Koinonia has been an opportunity for Aquinas upperclassmen for a few years now. Usually, the location of the retreat is either Jumonville or Ligonier. This year it was at Laurelville. The student leaders include Louis Bentivegna, Will Scioscia, Alice Rothfus, J.J. Ortiz, Tess Duer, Felicity Koble, Daniel Hartle, and Brynn Burnsworth. The teacher chaperones are Mr. Kuniega, Ms. Amon, Mr. Austin, and Mrs. Dechamps.

When asked if Koinonia sounded good, Mr. Malchano responded, "Why wouldn't it be?" He believes that this retreat is beneficial to the students. Students seem to agree with him. Last year senior Maddy Bradley attended the retreat as a junior. She had only positive things to say about it. "Koinonia really grew my faith. It was so nice to have a lot of fun and heartfelt talks at the same time."

Claire McMann also attended the retreat last year as a junior. She said, "I think Koinonia is beautiful. It made me think about things I've never thought about before." Senior Kat Repasky, attending the retreat for the first time this year, stated, "I'm so excited. I've only heard good things, and it seems like a place to truly connect with God and strengthen friendships."

In the years to come, the teachers, as well as the juniors, hope to keep the tradition living. They hope that every year students will be given this opportunity. Junior Tess Duer thinks this is an amazing event, and she would be sad if for whatever reason it stopped being offered to students. We hope that this year's Koinonia was amazing for everyone!



## When it Comes to Pro-Life, Aquinas is Cooking

By: Felicity Koble

On Tuesday, March 4th, Aquinas Academy held arguably one of the sweetest Shrove Tuesday traditions: Cakes for Life. This fan favorite fundraiser is a baking competition open to all students. Participants enter their best pastry creations to earn votes from the student body, in the form of \$1 bills. Cakes for Life traditionally happens on Shrove (Fat) Tuesday, the last day before Lent. While all cakes benefit the student body, all money benefits the pro-life agency, Birthright, making this event an amazing win-win.

This year's lineup sported over twenty different cakes varying in theme and size from "Hear Me Out: Life Rules" to a beautiful birch tree cake. When asked what he would bake if he were participating, Mr. Malchano remarked, "Funfetti sounds fun." Junior Brad Moore, who made the amazing snake cake, commented, "When I used the fondant, it looked like a worm, so I had to smear it with red food paint." Junior Marielle Dillner said she "really liked Brad's cake." Others, such as sophomore Aarona Casas, loved the Hear Me Out cake. Aarona said it "tied something viral that we all knew about, but added a pro-life spin to it." Regardless, only one baker seriously left no crumbs. Senior Alice Rothfus, now a three-time winner, claimed victory with her Bucket of Chicken creation. "I wanted to make mine a tribute to Mr. Lizardo and the [Latin book] last year," she explained, "This year I wanted to continue the Latin theme." The term *Bucket of Chicken* was one helpful and memorable device Mr. Lizardo had used to describe the simple

aspect of Latin verbs. Alice said her favorite thing about her cake was that "it made people laugh, and it was definitely a goofy cake."

Sweet, sweet victory being a plus, the best part of Cakes for Life were the donations Aquinas could make to Birthright, an international pro-life agency that, since 1968, has helped women in crisis pregnancies to have their children by providing supplies, information, and loving support. A woman who called Birthright in need would receive complete judgement-free, confidential care, and would be guided to choose life for her infant. "The word 'birthright' means certain rights being due to someone when they are born, but the organization Birthright takes it a step farther and argues for the right to birth," junior Savannah Deschamps, co-president of Vivat Vita said.

Besides money, many Aquinas students volunteered to monitor the competition, cut cake, and donate cutlery.

Overall, Cakes for Life was another sweet success, and combined with Art for Life in the fall raised almost a thousand dollars for various pro-life agencies, as well as awareness for the cause. Even so, there is no shortage of things you can do to witness to the pro-life cause. Pro-Life T-Shirt Day will be taking place soon, and is a great opportunity to be a quiet witness to the truth, both within the Aquinas Academy campus and beyond.



# The College Board

By: Madison Bradley

The College Board has been involved in the lives of high school students for 125 years and Aquinas students have been no exception to this influence. It was formed in December of 1899 to make higher education more accessible to high school students. The College Board offers Advanced Placement (AP) classes. These AP classes are great opportunities because they allow high school students to take a college level course and a test in May for potential college credits. These classes help high schoolers prepare for college and may even allow them to graduate early due to them having enough credits from the tests. While these classes and tests are a great opportunity, they are no walk in the park. The College Board's tests can be tricky and unpredictable.

Aquinas offers ten AP courses for highschoolers in grades 10-12. These courses include AP United States History, AP European History, AP Chemistry, AP Physics, AP Latin, AP World Literature, AP Government, AP Statistics, AP Calc AB,

and AP Calc BC. Though the school offers many AP classes, some students at Aquinas are not big fans of these courses. Sometimes the fast pace of AP classes can make them stressful. "The classes are great opportunities but sometimes aren't that helpful as it's a lot of information to fit into little time so it feels rushed," claims Claire McMann. Shayla Thimons says, "My AP math classes cause me a lot of stress." Alice Rothfus remarked, "In AP classes you're learning interesting subjects, getting college credit, and showing universities that you're prepared for a college education. Many colleges will take good AP scores into consideration when you don't submit an SAT score."

Mrs. Mitros and Mr. Malchano have worked for the College Board to read and score AP exams. When asked for his opinion on the College Board, Mr. Malchano said, "I love them, they are my employers." AP classes are not for everyone, but they offer the possibility of college credit, which is good for students who want to take less classes in college.



# Don't Know Much About History?

By: Lucy Flynn

Senior year is full of many different history classes such as Political Ideologies of the 20th century (Isms), Economics, AP Government and Introduction to Constitutional Law.

Not all of these history classes are AP classes; Isms and Economics are both college prep classes. Mr. Malchano teaches both of these classes but does not have a personal preference on which one he likes teaching more. Economics teaches social science on consumer goods. Senior Ashlin Knox, reflects on the Isms class, "It's nice to be able to have a refresher and learn more about different political ideologies before leaving Aquinas." Mr. Malchano says that "Isms is about understanding different political, radical ideologies of the 20th century and consists of reading a lot of material." Recently in Isms they focused on communism and how it was portrayed in *Animal Farm*. Now they will be evaluating totalitarianism in the lens of George Orwell's book *1984*.

The primary goal of the AP Government class is to understand how the U.S. government functions and how it evolves. It is hard to understand our government and the different facets of politics. This class also prepares young people on how to properly vote. Mrs. Allen's favorite part about teaching this class is "hearing all the different opinions of the students. I enjoy listening to them think through these important and difficult topics facing our country today."

Constitutional law is taught by Mr. Blume. In this class students study Supreme Court cases and current cases or what to expect in college with regards to freedom of speech. This class may be challenging, and Nick Urban believes that the best advice that he can give about this class is, "to take notes on the court cases while reading because when he questions you in class you can have a response and a majority of the grades are participation so just having a general idea of the cases will go a long way!" These history classes help students gain a better understanding of ideologies in the world today, our government, and how the law works.

# Somewhere Over the Rainbow

By: Caitlyn Abbett

Every spring the Aquinas Middle School puts on a fantastic play directed by Mr. Flynn. This year he chose *The Wizard of Oz*, a fun and heartfelt fantasy about a girl named Dorothy who is whisked away to the magical land of Oz and meets some unexpected friends on her way to meet the Wizard. Auditions were held February 25th and 26th, and rehearsals kicked off March 3rd.

Seventh grader Madison Abbett, who auditioned the second afternoon, expressed, "I was a little nervous because it was my first time trying out for a play, and there were so many other students, but I had a lot of fun auditioning with my friends!" Mr. Flynn is very excited for the production to start, as there are over 80 middle schoolers in the cast. He says, "The last time we put on this production in 2018 we only had a cast of 62. This year I am so excited to have such a big and talented group of middle schoolers and a lot of ensemble members to work with!"

Mrs. Meland, who handles costumes, is also very happy to see the play again. "It's going to be a lot this year, with so many kids in the cast and a lot of different roles," she shared, "But I look forward to seeing how it will all turn out!"

Eighth grader Mary Grace Dolan, who is playing the Wicked Witch of the West, is excited to play a villain and enjoys the challenge that comes with it. She says, "I think it will go really well because we have a great group of people, and I'm super excited to work with them!" Eighth grader Jacqui Whitsel, who is playing a poppy, is also thrilled about the musical this year. "I really like the music, and this is by far my favorite play so far. I'm glad we started early so we have a lot of time to

make it a really good performance." Many faculty members are also looking forward to the play this year. Mr. Malchano, who is a huge fan of the musical *Wicked*, cannot wait for the play. Mr. Flynn never fails to put on a showstopper for both high school and middle school plays, so mark your calendar for Friday, March 28, and Saturday, March 29. *The Wizard of Oz* promises to bring excitement and magic to Aquinas.



# The Chicken or the Egg?

By: Jules Shemer

Since humans are outnumbered by chickens 3.5 to 1, it makes sense that some of Aquinas' students and teachers own some chickens, and in large numbers. Chicken owners of Aquinas Academy share their experiences with owning chickens. Senior Ashlin Knox gave her opinion, saying, "I have roughly 15-20 chickens and only a couple are named. We have a rooster named Buddy and a long feathered hen named Fluffy Feet. We have always had chickens since I was little, and they're not that much of a hassle since they wander around all day and return at night. One time we opened the garage door and the chickens were on top of my dad's car, ruining it!"

Senior Nick Urban shared his experiences with his chickens, remarking, "We have 13 chickens and will probably get more in the spring. Our chickens' names are Hedwig, Cookie, Luna, Robin, Chestnut, Henny, Penny, Snoopy, Trece, Mama, Fawn, and two of them are currently unnamed. Hedwig used to jump up on people's shoulders and heads, while Cookie and Luna love my three year old sister and let her pick them up."

Aquinas teachers Mr. Malchano and Mrs. Whetzel also share the same passion for chickens. Mr. Malchano said, "I currently have three chickens. I don't believe in naming chickens, but my family calls them Ricky, Mazie Crazy the Jersey Girl, and Annie. We bought chickens because they eat the ticks in our

yard and produce eggs." When asked if he had a funny chicken story he replied, "Nothing crazy to note other than 3 being murdered by other animals and Martin's obsession with trying to find a way to bring them inside our house."

Mrs. Whetzel holds the same philosophy of not naming chickens, "I have 6 hens and 2 roosters. One of them is grey and white, and we call it Silky. Otherwise, we did not name them. I think it's best not to name farm animals that are susceptible to predators." When asked if they were difficult to take care of, Mrs. Whetzel responded, "In some ways, they are a huge hassle and in other ways, they are really easy. They were a lot of work when they were chicks. But now that they are fully grown, you just have to feed them and make sure they have water, same as any other pet." Mrs. Whetzel also had a crazy chicken story saying, "Once when the chicks were a couple weeks old, one escaped from the cage and our dog immediately snatched it up in her mouth and ran off. We got the dog to drop it, and it was pretty badly injured. I was sure it would die. But my daughter held it for hours and somehow it survived!"

All in all, the chicken owners all agree that chickens are not tedious animals to have once they have grown up. It is safe to say that the ratio of chickens to humans seems to fit with the number of chickens members of the Aquinas community have.

# Lenten FRYdays at Assumption

By: Alice Rothfus



Last year, Mr. Malchano claimed that the Assumption fish fry was “delicious and streamlined.” Intrigued, I decided to spend my first Lenten Friday at Bellevue’s Assumption Church of Regina Coeli Parish. The cafeteria was lively with merry customers and bustling volunteers. Alumna Helen Rothfus joined me and commented that she “felt at home” at the Assumption fry.

Upon entering we waited in line to give our orders to volunteers. The menu was simple. Helen and I ordered the fried fish dinner with applesauce and fries as well as the baked fish dinner with fries and coleslaw (the man taking the order thought I said applesauce, so there was no coleslaw). Their drink offerings were water, iced tea, lemonade, and coffee. The lemonade was slightly sweeter than I would have liked it to be, but it still hit the spot. Helen grimaced as she sipped her coffee. She appreciated the hot temperature of the beverage, but the flavor was disappointing. We waited longer than we

expected. There was a group that was seated after us, but they got their meals before ours. Our food was sitting on the order table for a few minutes before the volunteer actually brought it to us, so the food was not warm.

Despite the food being lukewarm, it tasted good considering that this is a church fish fry. The baked cod was dry, but the flavor was amazing. It even came with a lemon wedge. The fries were also delicious and crispy. They had a special seasoning on them. The applesauce was average—it is difficult to mess up applesauce. When asked how her fried cod was, Helen shared, “Pretty good, although it’s not hot.” She added that, “the sandwich bun tastes perfect.”

This year Mr. Malchano commented that “inflation’s really hit the fish fry season.” Both the baked cod and the fried cod dinner (including two sides) cost \$15.00. The price is not favorable, but when you compare it to the price of fish you would get at restaurants, the cost of the church fish fry seems preferable. Also, when you buy your fish dinner you are helping fund the church.

Even though it had its quirks, the Assumption fry made my Lenten Friday feel not so penitential. With an enjoyable, family friendly atmosphere and decent food, the Assumption fish fry gets a 8/10. I would recommend visiting this fish fry before Lent is over.



# Brother Andre’s Cafe: From Prayer to Grand Opening

By: Jack Hoerster

Whether you go to the Most Precious Blood of Jesus, Regina Coeli, or any other parish in the area, there is always a sense of community between the churches. Brother Andre’s Cafe is serving as another way to tie each of us together through one glorious solution: coffee. It was through this wonderful, caffeinated beverage that the Fitzgerald family began to see a solution that would answer their prayers.

The story of Brother Andre’s Cafe started in 2018. Young Patrick Fitzgerald, a man with autism, had just graduated college, and was looking for a full time job. Sadly, no one would hire Patrick because of his intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs). Adults with IDD’s have an extremely difficult time finding employment. Unsure of what to do, Patrick and his family prayed to Brother Andre Bessette and Mary. In a stroke of divine intervention, a café named after the saint was founded through Move a Mountain Missions, staffed by adults with IDD’s. It was through prayer and determination that the Fitzgerald family began to set their plan into motion. Little did they know just how successful their idea would become.



Father Chris Donley, relative to the Donahue family and cofounder of Move a Mountain Missions, partnered with the Fitzgeralds in late 2019. He saw this project as a way to “be Jesus for the most vulnerable all over the world.” Brother Andre’s Café set up shop within Divine Mercy Parish on April 19th, 2020, but the grand opening was postponed until October 2nd, 2021, due to the pandemic. The Fitzgeralds and Move a Mountain were able to pivot amidst the crisis, turning Brother Andre’s into an online store and hiring their first employees. As of today, Brother Andre’s Café has two locations: one in Divine Mercy Parish and one in Regina Coeli Parish.

This month was a massive step forward for Brother Andre’s, as they had their grand opening of their second location, located under the Church of the Assumption in the Bellevue borough. This project has been in the works for the last two years and is the product of patience and resilience. A plethora of students and faculty are members of this parish. It gives students and faculty who do not live near the city a chance to experience the bliss that radiates from Brother Andre’s Café.

When she was asked about the new Brother Andre’s location, junior Lara Hainan remarked that, while she has only been to the one underneath Epiphany, she loves to go there after Mass and spend time there. “It’s a really nice space,” she added. Lara mentioned that one of the employees that she is friends with, Shay, is really nice. When asked about what she orders, Lara said she enjoys their sandwiches, coffee, and, most importantly, “they have really good cookies.” That was a running theme with everyone who has been to Brother Andre’s. Mr. Deschamps remarked that they have “delicious cookies,” with the chocolate chip being his favorite. Since Mr. Deschamps is a parishioner of Assumption, he is personally excited to not have to drive into the city to relish in Brother Andre’s unique atmosphere. “Bellevue is better than Pittsburgh,” he added with a smirk. Mr. Malchano even pitched into the debate about the cookies at Brother Andre’s by saying that he is a “huge sucker for a snickerdoodle or a peanut butter cup.” His order is a straight black coffee and sometimes a cookie for “The Child” (his son Martin Malchano). So if you’re nearby either Epiphany or Assumption, be sure to stop by the basement and check out Brother Andre’s Café, a location like no other.

## Somewhere at the End of the Rainbow

By: Laila Tuffiash

As spring approaches, St. Patrick’s Day does as well. With it comes many traditions that Aquinas students and teachers celebrate. Kindergarten students arrive at school to a classroom that is made topsy-turvy by none other than the Leprechaun himself. Sometimes the Leprechaun will even leave the young students treats. High school students are encouraged to accessorize for the holiday; they get to wear themed jewelry, shirts, hair accessories, and socks. Mr. Salinas will sometimes plan a themed activity for the middle school students during the Crusader period that week. Last year, Duran Lurie planned a themed game of “Gingers vs Green Team” dodgeball where the high schoolers with red hair and members of Megastoi pelted each other with dodgeballs.

However, St Patrick’s day is not the only significant event on March 17th. Mr. Malchano’s birthday falls on that same day. Because of this, he does not usually do anything specifically to celebrate St. Patrick’s Day, but he will sometimes take Martin (his three-year-old son) to watch the St. Patrick’s Day parade downtown since “he likes to watch all the green people marching by.”

Not only are there fun activities to participate in around the city for St. Patrick’s Day, but there are many traditional foods made for the holiday. Sixth grader Grace Tuffiash’s mom sometimes makes a traditional Irish dish called *colcannon*, which consists of mashed potatoes and cabbage served with corned beef. Other people simply like to go through a McDonald’s drive through and get a green, minty Shamrock Shake. This includes junior Patrick Richtammer, who sometimes makes the Shamrock Shakes himself with his siblings, along with making green eggs and ham. Junior Jules Shemer and her family bring Shamrock Shakes to their grandmother (who is 100% Irish) and spend time with her in the home where she lives. The Aquinas community celebrates Saint Patrick’s Day well.



# The Dumb Vox Is Back

By: Claire McMann

A few years back Mr. Dolan created Aquinas's official podcast, *The Dumb Vox*. The teaser trailer was uploaded October 26, 2022, and was followed by 26 episodes, ranging from 10-30 minutes each. Some of the most popular episodes include a double feature of alumni Mary BouSamra and Sam Buchanan about being Valedictorian and Salutatorian, and interviews with Mr. Salinas and Mr. Malchano.

Mr. Dolan retired from the podcast this year because he is preoccupied with taking classes at Ave Maria University to get his Masters in Education. Make sure you congratulate Mr. Dolan on this if you see him in the hall. He handed down the job to his niece, Anne Dolan, and fellow senior Alice Rothfus. Both hosts are editors of *The Dumb Ox* newspaper and have been attending Aquinas for many years. The podcast episodes range from 15 to 30 minutes and can be found on Spotify. The episodes usually contain the hosts talking with one or two guests about an Aquinas-related topic. The first episode following the introduction is with seniors J.J. Ortiz and Clara Yuo, discussing the newly implemented middle school forensics team. The third episode is an interview with the Assistant High School Director, Mrs. Whetzel.

Anne comments that the podcast is mainly focusing on Aquinas people and Aquinas culture. "The podcast will be similar to the prior one, but different because we are high school seniors and have the perspective of people actually attending the school. We also have some side quests and fun topics to keep the podcast interesting!"



The new episodes are released on Spotify every Friday. Mr. Dolan's archive episodes are on Apple Music. Be sure to go check out *The Dumb Vox*, whether you are a returning listener or just looking for 15-30 minutes of informative entertainment!

# Historical Hot Takes

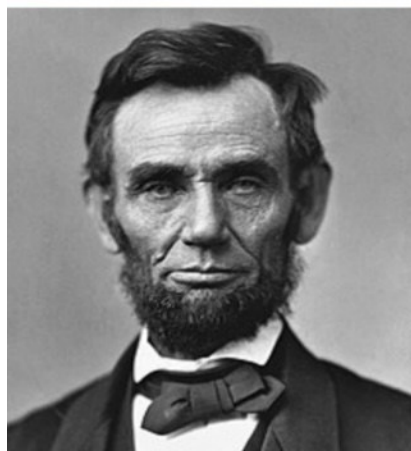
By: Abigail Irvin

Aquinas history classes cover a wide variety of topics, from early civilizations to the 21st century. The history teachers also have diverse favorite historical figures.

Mr. Flynn's favorite historical figure is Saint King Louis IX of France. He reigned from 1214-1270 and is recognized for his reforms, sparking intellectual, spiritual, and cultural growth. Saint King Louis IX also led the 7th and 8th crusades. Mr. Flynn particularly admires him because he "knew the difference between church and state and he was humble with his nobles." Mr. Flynn also respects how he compensated innocent civilians who had property destroyed in war. Mr. Kuniega admires Saint King Louis IX as well. He deems St. Louis "a model ruler and the greatest example of a powerful leader who was holy. He did great things for France and was a great father. St. Louis perfectly balanced being king and knowing his duties to God."

Mr. Dolan's favorite is Charlemagne. He was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 800 and is known for his military campaigns as well as the revival of learning in his empire. Mr. Dolan began admiring him when he "started to read about [Charlemagne] for 7th grade. He developed western Christendom, and his empire became the European basis for Christianity. He loved education and his teacher was a saint."

It is no surprise that Mrs. Allen is a big fan of Abraham Lincoln. The 16th president is one of the most remarkable figures in American history. He guided the country through the tumultuous Civil War and fought for an end to slavery. Mrs. Allen says, "I think that Abraham Lincoln was a rare, courageous leader, who made mistakes in his life but developed strong moral clarity."



He showed mercy when most leaders chose vengeance. He saved the nation and ultimately died for the cause of freedom.” Students agree with Mrs. Allen’s opinion. Brad Moore commented that he “likes Lincoln because he tried to get the country back together even if it made others angry. He saw the importance in unity even if others disagreed.” Gabby Sciulli believes that Lincoln is “one of the best presidents ever to take office. I think he was a man of extreme endurance and wit, despite not having formal education. He is one of our first real examples of a hard working American.”

Most people know that Mr. Malchano’s favorite historical figure is Otto Von Bismark. He was prime minister of Prussia and unified Germany, becoming the country’s first Chancellor. Mr. Malchano likes Bismark because “He’s the man. He was a terrible person but knew how to run countries. He also has a great mustache.” Clara Yuo says that “I personally wouldn’t say I was any more fascinated with Bismarck than any other historical figure. However, as a result of Mr. Malchano’s lively commentary, he is definitely one of the most memorable historical figures from AP Euro.”

It is evident that the teachers chose historical figures that correlate with the classes they teach and that the history department admires a vast array of figures.

---

## Skechers to Suits

By: Ashlin Knox

From playing in Sketchers to teaching in suits, Mr. Malchano and Mr. Deschamps have been fast friends for most of their lives. The two teachers grew up together and rekindled their friendship later on. They first met in preschool at the old St. Catherine’s, right on Aquinas’s campus. Since they lived near one another, their parents would coordinate rides and aftercare. Mr. Deschamps shared his earliest memory of their friendship, saying “We were both pretty obsessed with an elephant slide.” He recalled that they would hide under it. Senior David Zaharko commented, “Mr. Malchano and Mr. Deschamps show how long a healthy friendship can last if it is done right.”

Although they attended different middle and high schools, they still hung out together. Mr. Deschamps said, “It was nice for the both of us to have a friend that didn’t go to the same school we went to. It provided a second social group.” After being separated through high school, they reconnected again at Franciscan University and ended up living together for a year. The craziest thing they accomplished together was their adventures in Europe while studying abroad. In the early 2010’s, before smartphones were common, Mr. Deschamps and Mr. Malchano were “traveling through countries with nothing but maps and rough plans.” Mr. Deschamps said they “even had to sleep in the back of the hallway of a train car. It was a long night.”

Mr. Malchano was the first of the two to teach at Aquinas. In fact, Mr. Deschamps wrote a letter of recommendation for Mr. Malchano when he applied for the job. When asked if Mr. Deschamps ever thought he would end up in the same place with Mr. Malchano again, he said, “It certainly wasn’t the plan.” Mr. Deschamps said seeing his friend is “always a highlight.” Outside of the workplace, the two spend time together over the weekend. They especially enjoy their Sunday coffee hangouts. Martin Malchano, Mr. Malchano’s son, calls them “Fancy Coffee Sundays!”

Mr. Deschamps and Mr. Malchano also enjoy attending concerts together. However, in recent years, “most activities are structured around Martin activities.” Mr. Deschamps and Mr. Malchano were friends from the very early years of their lives, circled back to the same college, and now teach at the same school. It is amazing to see how no matter how far a person goes, he will always find his way back to where he is called to be.



Not every Aquinas teacher has been here since the beginning, and faculty members have had diverse jobs prior to working at Aquinas.

Ms. McGrath, a high school English teacher, used to teach gym and art during her first year at Sacred Heart Elementary School. She said, "Teaching middle school was very high-energy, and I give a lot of teachers tons of credit." Her favorite memory from teaching there was a giant water balloon fight that broke out between the teachers and students during a field day.

Mrs. Martyak, the high school College Counselor, was a nonprofit accountant after receiving an undergraduate degree in accounting. She then, "earned [her] MBA before returning to grad school to study counseling. [She] worked as an outpatient therapist prior to coming to Aquinas."

Mr. Deschamps, our new Head of School, worked in marketing and sales for Union Pacific Railroad. He was involved in "freight services" which included setting prices, understanding markets, and negotiating with other companies in various industries. "Mine were biofuels (ethanol, biodiesel, etc.) and frac sand," he shared. Mr. Deschamps "lived in Omaha for two years and then Denver for two years. I got to travel to many places in the country - Nashville, New Orleans, Wyoming, and all over Texas and California to name a few." Then he moved back to Pittsburgh to start teaching at Aquinas.

Mr. Flynn, the high school Director, used to live and teach at a small school in Massachusetts. Before that he taught at a "kind of hippy/libertarian school called Full Circle School for five years. It was a one room school house that was Pre-K through sixth grade." As he was working these jobs he did not take the summer off; he was busy "at a pickle factory in South Deerfield, Massachusetts. [He] was a supervisor, and later [he] worked in quality assurance."

Last but certainly not least, Mr. Malchano, a history teacher, used to be involved in roofing. He also worked as a janitor in North Allegheny School District for four years. Additionally, Mr. Malchano worked at Sleepy Hollow Academy in South Park where he "learned a lot about classroom management and how to explain topics to students" for two years. Mr. Malchano also worked as a substitute teacher for various schools in Ohio. Our teachers are always full of surprises, and finding out more about them is interesting!

## Writers' Favorite

### Historical Figure:

Abigail: Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain

Anne: Queen Elizabeth

Alexa: Rasputin

Alice: Princess Diana Spencer

Ashlin: Botticelli

Brynn: Leonardo da Vinci

Caitlyn: Alexander Hamilton

Claire: Karl Marx

Clara: Clara Barton

Felicity: St. Thomas Moore

Jack: The Lizard People

Jules: Michaelangelo

Katherine: Galileo Galilei

Laila: The Wright Brothers

Lucy: Abraham Lincoln

Maddy: The Habsburg Chin

Sam: Otto Von Bismarck's Moustache



Please send articles, ideas, corrections, or Snips and Quips to:  
[thedumbbox@aquinasacademy-pittsburgh.org](mailto:thedumbbox@aquinasacademy-pittsburgh.org)

Aquinas Academy

2308 West Hardies Road

Gibsonia, PA 15044



Although *The Dumb Ox* is the official student newspaper of Aquinas Academy, the views expressed by the staff of this newspaper and the published editors may not reflect the views held by the Aquinas Academy Board of Directors, Administration, Staff, or any other facet of the Academy

# **Snips & Quips**

## **Mr. Malchano Edition**

“Do you know what mewing is?”

-Daniel H.

“Is that when you pretend to be a cow?”

-Mr. Malchano

“I try to wake up before my alarm.”

-Mr. Malchano

“That’s psychotic.”

-Lara H.

“They only had 9 month delivery when I bought my kid.”

-Mr. Malchano

“I dream about throwing cantaloupes at people when they’re on their phones while in their cars just to see what they’d do.”

-Mr. Malchano

“Imagine the 80 year old women who are cantors at Mass, dancing around all the time. Just imagine.”

-Mr. Malchano

“Somewhere there’s a picture of King Louis with his cute calves.”

-Mr. Malchano

“Hell hath no fury like a Frenchwoman without her bread.”

- Mr Malchano

“I went on a very romantic date with my wife... and my son...at Costco.”

-Mr. Malchano

“I will take over the world, one graphite bathtub at a time.”

-Mr. Malchano

“You might be given the honor of giving the king his shoe.

\*gasps\* Be still my beating heart!”

-Mr. Malchano

\*talking about his wife\* “I met someone that tolerated me when I was fourteen...and here we are.”

-Mr. Malchano

“Trees are made up of chloroform, right?”

-Mr. Malchano

“You mean chlorophyll?”

-Savannah D.

“Oops.”

-Mr. Malchano

\*talking about Disney World\*

“I’ll be at the House of Mouse eating oversized-overpriced turkey legs.”

-Mr. Malchano

“Who started the Cold War?”

- Mr. Malchano

“Uhhh....Me?”

- Martin Malchano

“Back then there were only a few people who got married for love... whatever that means.”

-Mr. Malchano

\*receiving a spam call\* “It’s probably the blood bank. Those vampires call me all the time”

-Mr. Malchano

“I had really weird friends. Not many. All imaginary.”

- Mr. Malchano

“Napoleon comes back to win the championship, Michael Jordan style.”

-Mr. Malchano

Attention High  
School Juniors!

Spring Open House:  
Saturday, April 26, 2025

# Become that someone

at Saint Francis University.

Jump start your  
college search process  
& experience campus  
life as a member of our  
Red Flash family!



*Scan the QR code  
to register today!*



*Scholarships available for Catholic High School students!*

**We're less than 2 hours away!  
Visit Us Today:**

[francis.edu/visit](http://francis.edu/visit)

(814) 472-3100