

# The Dumb Ox

## April 2025



### Off To See the Wizard

By: Ashlin Knox

Lights, Camera, Munchkins! The middle school students, directed by Mr. Flynn, put on the *Wizard of Oz* Friday, March 28, and Saturday, March 29. Families and students gathered to support their classmates and siblings, watching them following the yellow brick road and fearing lions and tigers and bears. Stage manager and sophomore Aarona Casas said working with Mr. Flynn was “a nice experience being able to see the other side of a production.” Mr. Flynn added that “the show went incredibly well, especially Saturday. I have never seen such universal enthusiasm.”

Another person who made the show possible was junior Felicity Koble. She does an amazing job with all the productions, and said she loved the middle school production because “everyone has so much energy and is enthusiastic.” This year Mr. Flynn added a different song called “Ape Man,” sung by the monkeys. Felicity said his music choices are “always very creative and fitting,” while she loves to see the audience's reaction to a modern song.

Another teacher who contributes so much of her time and dedication to the school productions is Mrs. Meland. Each year she works endlessly to dress each actor for success and to create the most fitting costume for each role. This year she said, “I was really happy with how the costumes turned out, and it was the first time we did winged monkeys.” She also thought the “poppies looked great, and the big bows for the munchkins looked so good.” Alumna Julia Meland and senior Nadine Hokaj also helped with the costumes, lightening the burden on Mrs. Meland.

Finally, the actors and actresses who put on the final performance of their middle school careers were the eighth graders. Juliana Gruber, Mayor of Munchkin City, said when she was on stage, she felt “very energetic, and the adrenaline was coursing through me.” Morgan Randall, who starred as Dorothy, said she was nervous because “I had never been in a lead role before, and I wanted to do my best.” On a less serious note, Gabby Keverline, who choreographed most of the dances and starred as one of Glinda's Girls, said while on stage she had to “look pretty and do my best.” Overall the weekend was a success, and all the thespians enjoyed their time singing and dancing along the yellow brick road.

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# Running Into Spring

By: Brynn Burnsworth

With the final months of the 2024-2025 school year approaching, students are participating in their last chance to play a sport this year. Now that basketball is finally over, spring sports are in full swing. Two tried and true ones, girls lacrosse and track, are kicking their seasons off better than ever.

This year lacrosse has only around fifteen people participating. No freshmen have decided to come and play, but the team is hoping to recruit some girls for next year! The team had a change in leadership last year with Coach Johnston taking over. The players on the team have only had positive things to say about this transition. Senior Bella Recchi said, "This year is so much more fun than the others." The team also seems to be making an improvement with two wins under its belt already. Claire McMann shared that she is "so proud of everyone, especially the girls who are new."

As for track, runners are doing equally well! During preseason they had some indoor practices, but they have now moved to practicing at North Park. Senior J.J. Ortiz commented, "Track really helps me improve my discipline." Sam McGowen added that he is "really enjoying the season so far!" Track also has some new coaches this year. Coach McGrath and Coach Grese have taken responsibility for the team, and feedback has been incredibly positive! There are around twenty people on the team this year, including a lot of newcomers. They had their first meet on Friday, March 28th.

Both sports have been utilizing the new gym this season. With lifts held during the pre-seasons, players on both teams feel prepared for the season. Spring sports are off to a great start this year! We wish them both the best of luck for the rest of the season.



# Hitting Home Runs and Serving Up Aces

By: Alexa Risdon

As winter ends and the weather clears up, boys' volleyball and baseball start up again for their spring seasons.

The high school boys volleyball team is coached by Mr. Mlecko, who coached the team last year and has high hopes for the season. He believes that since Aquinas played well against North Catholic, which is a 4A competitor, "our team can compete, and the athletic hitters have the talent to run unique rotations." Kenny Fort, a senior on the team, is excited for this season even going against the bigger competitors such as Shaler and Mars. His favorite part about the team is their ability to balance having fun and working hard during practice and games. Kenny mentioned, "Our best quality this year is definitely attacking now that Sam Duer is back we have an even stronger front row."



The high school baseball team, which started as a club last year, is in their

first WPIAL season. Their coaches, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Hannan, and Mr. Roney, have a lot of experience, and they look forward to a successful season. Coach Phelps, the team's head coach and former MLB pitcher, has loved playing and coaching all his life. He is glad to coach because "the game of baseball gave a lot to me, and I am grateful to give back." Coach Hannan feels "God has called me to positively impact the lives of young men through my knowledge and love for the sport," and he hopes to coach just as a teacher would teach his or her class. All three coaches are pumped for the upcoming season, and their goals are to make the playoffs in their first year in the WPIAL. As Coach Hannan stated, "Our team cares about each other and about playing the game



the right way, and that will pay dividends to our goals of making it to the playoffs in the long run."

With the weather improving, so will our sports teams. The boys volleyball and baseball teams have bright days ahead.

# The SAT Comes to Aquinas

By: Jack Hoerster

A majority of the juniors and seniors at Aquinas await the day where they will endure the trials and tribulations that come as part of the most anxiety-inducing test in history: the SAT.

The SAT is a test designed for left brain thinking, so it requires logical reasoning and the use of evidence in its answers, shying away from answers based purely off of intuition or feeling. Colleges believe that this type of thinking is the best measurement of whether a student is a right fit for their college, as it is an easy way to evaluate the core of a prospective student. The SAT manages to show a student's dedication, problem solving, and application of the sciences and language. Because of this, the SAT has found a special home amongst the Ivy Leagues and other gold standard schools. It is scored out of 1600 points, and is composed of an 800 point reading and writing section and an 800 point math section. This two hour exam is one of the main ways students have shown potential colleges their strengths. However, since 2020, a majority of schools have turned toward being test optional, where they state that submitting your SAT and ACT scores can only potentially help your chances. Seniors everywhere loved this change. Now, many schools are turning back to their old ways, requiring standardized scores from the 2026 graduates.

The SAT is a source of stress for countless juniors and seniors across the world. Many students feel overwhelmed when preparing for this test. Some students respond to the stress by not studying at all for the test, while others take courses and buy hefty practice books. Everyone has their own way to cope with anxiety. Academic prefect Kat Repasky believes that you should not "get too stressed as you can always retake it." She also mentioned that prospective students should take advantage of the school's resources, such as Mrs. Mitros' review days. Kat kept an open mind about the new digital format of the SAT, which was implemented this year. "I was excited for it to be online," she answered. Junior Savannah Deschamps mentioned that, while the SAT was not her favorite test, she was not worried about it, noting that "I'm taking it again." When it came to her tips on how to prepare for the test, Savannah said she would use a prep book and "take a practice test or two to find out what you

don't know."

While the SAT is a very useful and important test, there are some flaws to it. Notably, when taking the SAT, your score can be capped depending on how well you do in the first section of the reading and math modules. Junior Maggie McBride disliked this system, mentioning that, without it, "everyone takes the same test." Even with this major obstacle, Maggie did not hate the actual SAT test. After taking the test, she remarked that "It's not awful, but it doesn't represent many people's academic abilities." Another critique of the SAT comes from junior Lara Hainan, who, unlike Kat Repasky, actually disliked the transition towards a fully digital test. "Maybe I'm just old fashioned," she said. "It's so much harder to focus and comprehend the words and questions than when they are on paper." This just shows that there are many opinions surrounding the medium of the test, whether it be on paper or digital; each has their strengths and weaknesses.

Junior Felicity Koble has her hot take about the SAT: it's a game. While simplifying the overlooming SAT into such a statement seems baffling at first, Felicity actually has a method behind her madness. "It's actually kind of enjoyable when you figure out how they're trying to trick you," she remarked. Her experience with standardized testing and hours of studying SAT Prep books has allowed her to figure out how to circumnavigate the cryptic questions the College Board likes to throw at unsuspecting students. "But...you can't always hack the system," she added thoughtfully. The SAT can be like a game, but it is still a major hurdle for juniors and seniors.

As a freshman, it is difficult to see the SAT as an impending responsibility, as it is nearly two full years away. Peter Koble, a freshman, holds this type of viewpoint. "I am not too concerned about it yet," he mentioned, "as it is still on the horizon." He later added that he knows that "it is a long way off, but it should not be taken lightly." When it comes to actually preparing, a majority of people can agree that Mrs. Mitros' prep class is a necessity, and that your studies should be supplemented with a good amount of practice tests, familiarization, and, most importantly, sleep.





# The Prefect Process

By: Lucy Flynn

Since the end of the year is coming up there are new prefects on the horizon as well. The prefect structure including the election format has been in place for 10 years and is much more than a popularity contest. Recently rank voting has been implemented on the google classroom to create more accurate and fair elections. This way someone can rank the people in order of who they most want to run for the position. This system ensures the student has broad support from the school community. Mr. Austin says that this year Ms. Fetcho and he have overseen the prefect board with the help of Mr. Flynn and Mrs. Whetzel.

Mrs. Whetzel, in her first year as assistant director of the high school, has an active role in the prefect application process. In order to apply to become a prefect, candidates must fill out an application and have two interviews.

The first interview is with the current prefect and the other is with Mrs. Whetzel. The interview with the existing prefect helps the candidate understand what the position entails and the interview with Mrs. Whetzel allows candidates to talk about their ideas and goals. Meeting with both is important because according to Mrs. Whetzel “you must understand the position you are applying for.” In the rare occurrence of a tie Mrs. Whetzel suggests, “We will flip a coin!”

Jonah Burchill was elected to the position of Head Prefect for the 2025-26 school year. For Jonah, campaigning and meeting with both Mrs. Whetzel and the existing Head Prefect J.J. Ortiz was a positive experience because he realized what he was getting into and what was expected of him. Jonah’s goals for this coming year consist of making next year more faith centered by working with the campus ministry prefect to keep faith in the student body. He plans to continue building school spirit. He has some ideas about implementing more frequent assemblies and running smaller events for a few high school grades at a time. These events would be faith nights in which, for example, sophomores and freshmen boys or girls could attend to create friendships and build unity. Jonah looks forward to learning from the current prefects and working with the new prefect board next year.



## Service Recap 2024-2025

By: Laila Tuffiash

Junior Jack Hoerster has done a great job as service prefect this year, leading many different service projects. “I like that Jack reaches out to people about events so that I can go to events that I might not have known about otherwise,” Caitlyn Abbett stated.

Service projects included five Red Door days. About once a month on a Saturday, high school students had the opportunity to serve at the Red Door in downtown Pittsburgh. At the Red Door, volunteers serve food to homeless and hungry people. At St. Faustina’s Gate, an extension of the Red Door, students can help find clothing and hygiene products for people who cannot access these goods otherwise. Although some Red Door days were quite successful, there were some issues getting a consistent number of people to attend. Jack added that, “Red Door attendance is variable, some days we have too few people, and some days we have too many. It would be nice in the future to have a more consistent number of people, but overall I am happy with attendance. I know our work is appreciated.”

In addition to five Red Door days, there were six days where students could volunteer at Vincentian Home, a personal care home for the elderly in Ross Township. At Vincentian, students helped run various activities for the residents. They assisted in a Valentine’s Day party, a football watch party, a painting night, and craft making. “I went to the painting event and it was a creative way to spend time with older people,” said junior Maggie McBride. Jack is pleased with the attendance and execution of the Vincentian Home days. “We have only had a handful of people come to serve at each of the Vincentian events, but it has actually been the perfect number for the small size of the facility,” he added. “I am very happy with how the Vincentian visits went this year.”



Jack also organized two food drives this year. One of them was for the Red Door, and one of them was for Mary's Gate, a ministry of Regina Coeli Parish in Bellevue, where Jack is a parishioner. Mary's Gate hands out free lunches once a month for those who need them. Both food drives went very well. Other service events included a day of yard work for the Tarquinio family, who won a morning of yard work at the Gala. Students worked hard to do various gardening projects for the family, who was very happy with the turnout.

Additionally, high school students had the opportunity to help set up for events such as the middle school Fall Fest and high school dances. The student volunteers helped the events run smoothly, and teachers were very satisfied with the turnout. "Being service prefect is hard work, but I really enjoy it. It is nice that events are going the way they planned," said Jack.

## Blooming with Life

By: Katherine Repasky

A new garden is taking root, one in both the soil of our school and in the hearts of students. The mastermind behind this blossoming space is art teacher Mrs. Fetchko, whose love for gardening is as deep as her passion for creativity and teaching. "I want to show the students that you can be creative in gardening and treat the landscape like a canvas," she explains. With vibrant plants, student-made decorations, and a focus on hands-on learning, the garden is quickly becoming a special addition to the school. The garden is only bound to become more beautiful as spring approaches!

For Mrs. Fetchko, the garden is more than just a collection of flowers and greenery in a previously bleak location. Instead, it is an extension of her artistic vision and implementing it into learning. "You can combine gardening with art, science, math, religion, and even history!" she says enthusiastically. By intertwining nature with creativity, she is showing students that inspiration can bloom anywhere and everything is a learning experience.

Students are invited to leave their own mark on the garden too. Third grade students are learning about local bird species while decorating birdhouses that are suited for each type. Meanwhile, mixed media students are planning to add their artistic touch by painting pots inspired by famous works of art. Zoe Solomond expressed her love for the new garden stating, "When Ms. Fetchko showed me her plan for beautifying the garden by adding flowers like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci roses. I loved her idea of having us paint the pots imitating the artists' works on them!"

The garden goes beyond a platform for creativity; it also teaches valuable lessons on patience, the importance of nature, responsibility, and even physical wellness. Ms. Fetchko notes "It's an excellent platform for interdisciplinary learning!"

The garden's current state and level of student involvement is simply the beginning. Ms. Fetchko already has many plans in motion to launch a gardening club in the fourth quarter, and rose bushes will soon be planted as well. All of this will create an even more colorful and beautiful space. Overall, the creation of a space that brings joy to the community while also creating a shared appreciation for nature is something that the entire school can look forward to!





# Adios Mrs. Allen

By: Alice Rothfus

Last month it was announced that this school year would be Mrs. Allen's last year at Aquinas so that she could be a full-time mother. Nearly a week after the announcement, Mrs. Allen was called down to Florida to adopt a newborn baby girl. Despite the Aquinas community missing Mrs. Allen very much, we are so happy for her and her family.

Mrs. Allen started teaching in the 2022-2023 school year. She taught AP and honors U.S. History, Western Civilization, AP Government, and High School Prep. Junior and Western Civilization student Brad Moore spoke about Mrs. Allen saying, "I liked her humor and admired her patience with us when we were silly." Mrs. Allen brought enthusiasm to the lessons she taught; this spirit was contagious. Sophomore Katrina Kedzierski shared, "I loved being in Mrs. Allen's APUSH class because she was always so excited to teach." Junior Abigail Irvin added, "One of my favorite memories of Mrs. Allen was the extensive conversations about the Civil War we had outside of class. Not only was she an amazing teacher, but she really cared for all of her students." For many students Mrs. Allen sparked a love of history for them. Senior Clara Yuo said, "Mrs. Allen's APUSH class was one of the first history classes that I genuinely loved. I became a better student and a better writer in her class."

Aside from being a spectacular educator, Mrs. Allen also helped out with student organizations and clubs. She served as faculty advisor for Vivat Vita. Vivat Vita co-president Savannah Deschamps expressed, "Mrs. Allen's passion for life showed in all that she did through Vivat Vita. She gave up hours of her time to count money from our baby bottle drive for Genesis, and Christ's love of the little children showed through in her." Co-president Felicity Koble added, "I remember when we came to her with a list of long and complicated questions before the school year began. She replied immediately and helped us carry out our ideas with dedication. We're going to miss Mrs. Allen, but how beautiful it is that the very reason she has left is to witness to life herself!" Mrs. Allen also advised the Conspiracy Theories club. Club head Sam McGowan shared, "Mrs. Allen was a great teacher to have for Conspiracy Theory club for a couple of reasons. First, she partially came up with the idea, but then she was also willing to listen to all the crazy theories that I had come across to help figure out what I should talk about."

Teachers have also missed Mrs. Allen's presence in the school. Ms. McGrath, who started teaching at Aquinas the same year as Mrs. Allen, commented that Mrs. Allen "brought thoughtfulness to the workplace." She alluded to *Wicked*, a movie that the two bonded over, when saying, "We're just two friends." Mrs. Mullican continued with the *Wicked* references saying that Mrs. Allen changed those around her "For Good." Senora expressed, "I miss her everyday. In the teachers' lounge we were rose gold princess juntas with our stationery." Mrs. Whetzel added, "I appreciated how much she loved the students. She was passionate in her teaching and strong in her faith."

Since her leave, students have been wondering how Mrs. Allen is doing. She says, "I have been consumed with taking care of my sweet daughter Audrey and the journey to get back home." When asked if she wanted to say anything to the Aquinas community she said, "I am sorry I left so abruptly; that certainly was not the plan. Perhaps I can tell you all the full story one day just so you can understand how insane it was! Thank you for bringing joy into my life everyday (mostly ha!). I can genuinely say teaching all of you was one of the best experiences. I do and will miss you all! I hope you all keep learning about history and loving our Lord Jesus!" She affirmed that she will "definitely be at graduation."

Savannah Deschamps captured the thoughts of the student body when she said, "While the whole school will miss Mrs. Allen, we know she will be a wonderful mother, and we wish her the utmost happiness and many blessings." Seniors Katherine Repasky and Maddy Bradley added, "She's going to be the best mom!" Students and teachers alike admire Mrs. Allen and her devotion to education. Mrs. Allen taught us valuable lessons, supported us, and spread God's love. On behalf of the whole school, thank you Mrs. Allen!





# A Whole New World

By: Jules Shemer

As the year winds down, current eighth graders of Aquinas Academy prepare for the drastic change from middle school to high school while the freshmen reflect on their first year of high school.

Eighth graders were asked about their feelings about high school rapidly approaching. Daniel Yuo responded, "I feel decently prepared for high school and I am very excited about participating in the plays. I'm really excited to have Mr. Flynn as my history teacher, though I'm nervous about the homework." Amelia Kedzierski also feels prepared for high school saying, "I'm excited and nervous for high school, but my teachers have prepared me well for it. I'm most excited for clubs and other extracurricular activities." Mary Grace Dolan replied, "I am really excited for the high school sports and more social opportunities. I'm also excited for challenging classes and a more independent learning environment."

The freshmen have had a memorable first year of high school. Freshman Annette Bentivegna shared her experiences, remarking, "[High school] was what I expected, in that I knew what the structure would be, but I don't think I expected how different it would be too. We have way more freedom and I enjoy walking around with my backpack. You also really get to know other people in the different grades." Julia Santucci noted, "Freshman year was kind of how I expected it to be. The only difference is that there might be a little more homework and more tests but it's not that bad. My favorite part of freshman year was the fall retreat because I met a lot of my friends there." Thomas Bird, replied, "My freshman year was all I hoped it to be and more. It has been a wonderful experience both academically and socially."

Linus Burchill reflected on his freshman year, saying, "[It] was more than I expected it to be, mainly because of sports, which are much more rigorous and demanding. My favorite part about the year so far was making it to the third round



of states in basketball. Freshman year is much more difficult than eighth grade and the classes cover much more content."

Fellow classmate Pursy Martsolf replied, "I definitely had medium expectations for freshman year coming in as new to Aquinas, and those expectations have definitely been exceeded. I have amazing friends and I have loved being a part of the community. My favorite part about freshman year is experiencing everything about high school for the first time and making memories with my friends. Before I came to Aquinas, I heard many stories about the work overload and how it was nearly impossible to overcome. While still facing some challenges, I have really been surprised at how manageable everything has been so far."

Eighth graders and freshmen are positive about their experiences, are enjoying the school year, and are looking forward to the upcoming years of high school. With only one quarter left, eighth graders will continue to prepare for high school and freshmen will continue to enjoy it.

## The Senioritis Epidemic

By: Madison Bradley

It is spring in the high school and senioritis is in the air - or is it? Senioritis is the term for the lack of motivation felt by seniors as they reach the end of the school year. The legend of senioritis is that day by day it gets harder and harder to make it to class on time, stay awake, and do homework. But at Aquinas there is hope around shaking this mood.

Faculty members were asked for some tips on how to overcome senioritis. Some were more enthusiastic than others. Mr. Volkwein says "Just do it." Ms Dill remarks, "End with a bang not a whimper." "You still have to graduate, the ink is not dry on the diploma," claims Señora. "Finish strong; persevering until the end is a virtue," says Mrs. Meland. "Ask your guardian angel to help you to offer it up as an action of love to Jesus," suggested Mr. Meland. Mr. Malchano says "Don't be soft." This is all valuable information for seniors. Some other tips are to stay hydrated, take walks outside, hang out with friends, and eat nutritious food.

When asked if or how senioritis affected them, the seniors offered encouraging takes. Brynn Burnsworth acknowledged that, "It's harder to find motivation once you're into a college." But Kenny Fort has focused on "the way to get the most out of classes without stressing over the grade." Nolan Thiel has found more time for extracurriculars, expressing his excitement about *The Minecraft Movie*.

Some seniors are looking longingly at the horizon. "I'm excited for the next phase of life," said Joe Chufo. Claire McMann is also looking ahead to the remaining months with her friends in Pittsburgh. Ari Buchanan credits her peers with keeping her on track, saying, "My friends are what are keeping me going." Zoe Solomond is focusing on a healthy sleep schedule to keep her fresh for the finale, emphasizing her efforts to "get 8 hours of sleep every night."

In general, the seniors are excited to conclude their time at Aquinas well. "It's going by so fast. I'm going to miss it so much!" exclaims Shayla Thimons. Mark Cerny says "You should enjoy it while you're in it." It sounds like the seniors are putting in the effort to overcome senioritis and enjoy their remaining time at Aquinas.

# From the Cross to the Crown

By: Caitlyn Abbett

The 40 day stretch until Easter is a highly anticipated time of the year. Although the fasting and the waiting can make us impatient at times, the joy of Christ's Resurrection and the many traditions that come with it fill us with excitement. Whether it is getting together with family or finding ways to glorify God, many Aquinas students share their own special Easter traditions they look forward to.

As Senior Nicholas Urban waits for Easter Sunday he also anticipates the coming of new baby chickens. "I'm really excited that they're coming around the Easter season," he says. "They match the festivities and bring a nice welcoming to spring!" He also enjoys going to Mass with his family and altar serving at St. John Neumann Church on Easter Sunday.

Junior Lara Hanian shares a unique Mexican tradition called Cascarones. "We gather empty egg shells throughout the year, dye them, stuff them with confetti, and cover the top with tissue paper. Then we hide them like an egg hunt except when you find them, you smash them on top of people's heads. It's a really fun Easter game to play with family and friends!"

Junior Lucy Flynn enjoys the joys of Easter but also the Lenten journey. This year, she gave up makeup, fast food, and swearing. She was inspired by the Bible story Matthew 19:21-24. Jesus is telling a man the way to enter the Kingdom of Heaven is not to cling to his desired possessions, but rather to give them up and follow Him. "I'm working on loving my appearance more and not relying on food or beauty products to be happy," she shares. On Good Friday, Lucy and her family watch the Passion of Christ and pray the Divine Mercy Novena together.

Senior Alice Rothfus seeks out a variety of different fish fries each Friday in Lent and enjoys meeting new church members. "They make me feel at home, and I will definitely miss the fish fry culture when I'm at college," she says. She attends the Seven Churches on Holy Thursday and tries to go to service at Most Precious Blood on Good Friday. Over Good Friday and Holy Saturday, she bakes lamb cakes with vanilla and chocolate frosting and green dyed coconut flakes for grass.

The Aquinas community enjoys celebrating the holiday in their own special way. It's always fun looking forward to the many different festivities as well as remembering the reason for the season. It is important to thank Jesus and remember the sacrifice He made for us on Good Friday, as well as spending time with the ones you love this Easter season.



# Flowers for the Queen

By: Felicity Koble

On Tuesday, May 20th, all of Aquinas will participate in what is not only a beloved tradition of Aquinas but a beloved tradition of the Church: May Crowning. This beautiful Mass contains a ceremony honoring the Blessed Mother, as well as opportunities for first communicants and confirmandi to contribute in a special way to the liturgy. May Crowning has been a spring staple at Aquinas for countless years so students make sure they do not miss it!

May Crowning commences with a procession from the main parking lot to the altar of the chapel. Altar servers and the celebrant bear a statue of Mary on an elevated table, leading the entire student body to where the actual crowning takes place. Along the way, students receive flowers from the eighth grade confirmation class, placing them in vases held by the senior girls at the front of the chapel. During the procession, the Aquinas chapel choir (often including orchestration such as violin or flute) sings a Marian hymn, typically "Hail Holy Queen, Enthroned Above." Mr. Meland says this song is fitting because it emphasizes Mary's queenship. With many verses, the song lasts throughout the entire procession.

Once the procession is finished, two members of the second grade First Communion class adorn the statue of Mary with a special crown of flowers. Other second grade students participate as lectors or gift bearers, and the entire grade chants the Ave Maria during communion. Second grader James Koble reports "I feel excited" at the prospect of May Crowning. The second grade class also wears their First Communion best for the occasion, including white gowns for the girls and suits for the boys. "I feel like I'm in the FBI," James expressed.





The eighth graders get to dress up as well. Junior Lucy Flynn remembers how it felt to be one of the confirmandi: “It was the point where I realized that I had a relationship with God and was part of something amazing and beautiful.”

Participating in May Crowning is a longstanding tradition of the Church. Devotion to Mary during May originated in medieval times, when the month of May was associated with the Roman goddess of fertility. Dedicating the month of May to Mary was a successful way to Christianize the culture and honor Our Lady. Today Mary may not be the first person to come to mind when one thinks of May—perhaps instead the AP overlords, the teachers, or the guy who might ask you to dance at prom. With so much madness in the last stretch of the school year, whom else should we look to for intercession than our heavenly queen? May is the perfect time to honor the Blessed Mother, whether it be joining Rosary Club, going to May Crowning, or simply paying extra attention during the morning Memorare.

## Club Classics

By: Abigail Irvin

Every year, club period has been a staple for the Aquinas high school. The 2024-2025 school year has had some of the most memorable and creative clubs yet.

In the second quarter, Lara Hainan started the Dead Rappers Society, where club members produced raps on a variety of topics. Lara commented “Dead Rappers was really fun! I really enjoyed being creative while also having fun and being silly with my friends.”

Coffee, Tea, and Art club was also a creative outlet for students. Señora, the club proctor, says “Nadine has done an amazing job with the club. She created a nice, inviting atmosphere over the past 2 years.” Jules Shemer agreed, “I like my club because it's very chill. We played games while drinking tea. It was very relaxing after a long week.”

Other clubs fostered an athletic and active atmosphere. A club dedicated to Futsol, which is similar to soccer but indoors, was co-founded this year by Mark Rounding and Linus Burchill. Club proctor Mrs. Mullican remarked, “The futsal club

played in the gym or middle school doubles. They had a lot of energy and impressive soccer skills.”

A new club, Girls Flag Football, founded by Alexa Risdon, is meeting in the 4th quarter. Member Caitlyn Abbett is excited to be part of it. “I’m really excited for Girls Flag Football because many sports clubs are boys only. I’m happy that there’s a girls-only club and we have the opportunity to play.” Ms. McGrath commented “I have loved the creativity in the clubs this year and the new clubs that were founded, including my favorite, though I’m biased, girls flag football.”

During the third quarter, the Offer It Up club walked around outside in the cold weather. They offered their suffering up for the souls in Purgatory while socializing with their friends. Felicity Koble said, “It was the perfect way to end the week because it was as simple as going outside with your friends.” No matter what club high school students joined, everyone can agree it’s the perfect way to end the week.



# Senior Excursions

By: Claire McMann

Aquinas seniors have several field trips coming up, the first one being a chance to observe an open heart surgery. Students in Ms. Dill's Anatomy course are offered the opportunity to attend. According to Ms. Dill, the kids learn about the cardiovascular system in preparation for the surgery and then go to Allegheny General Hospital on the 14th of April. The room where the surgery takes place is special because it is an observatory room, and you can sit up at the top and look through windows. Maddy Bradley, who is currently taking the course, stated, "I'm very excited for the field trip in April." Eliana BouSamra shared the same sentiment, adding that she hopes to experience similar events in college. Lucy Fowler noted, "I am happy that we get to watch something after learning about the cardiovascular system. I went to a summer camp at Clemson last year and also got to view an open heart surgery, and it was very intriguing. I'm sure this field trip will be a great experience."



The second field trip offered to seniors is a trip to the Allegheny Courthouse. Several students in this year's senior class participate in Mock Trial, so they have already been to the courthouse on multiple occasions. Though they are familiar with the inner workings of the courtroom, several of them have commented they are excited to visit again with the whole class. Senior and mock trial witness Brynn Burnsworth stated, "I can't wait to bring my classmates to see where all my trials were!" Mrs. Allen left due to her family's new adopted baby (Congratulations Mrs. Allen!), and Mr. Blume has officially taken over the AP Gov and has scheduled a Courthouse visit for the seniors in May.

The last field trip which is always a favorite among seniors is the class trip to Cedar Point at the very end of the year. It is a whole day trip to Sandusky where Cedar Point is located. "I really hope we get to go to Cedar Point as a class because it might be one of the last times everyone is together. I also happen to love roller coasters, and Cedar Point is way more advanced and entertaining than Kennywood," says senior J.J. Ortiz. Mrs. Whetzel, the assistant highschool director, has confirmed the trip for the seniors and also says that she looks forward to it.

## DAGGERS & Daisies





# **Snips & Quips**

"I mean...if a freak car accident happened when I was 55...I'm chill with that."

-Louis B.

"What if you have something to live for by then?"

-Savannah D.

"Is there a bonus?"

-AP Euro class

"A QR code to my Venmo."

-Mr. Malchano

"I feel like I'm teaching a bunch of cats right now."

-Ms. A. McGrath

"If a woman left me beef tallow, I'd marry her. Put a ring on that finger."

-Will S.

"But Madison, Jesus died on the Cross for you."

-Caitlyn A.

"But it's CHOCOLATE!!!"

-Madison A.

\*Will S. reading Ephesians 5 "Wives submit to your husbands"\*

"Let me write this down real quick."

-Louis B.

"IT'S COLD! Oh never mind, I'm a man."

-Brad M

\*in a teenage girl voice\* "YERR DONE."

-Mr. Kuniega

"I don't get sick. I don't do sick. I wake up every morning and recite my anti-sickness affirmation in the mirror."

- Mr. Kuniega

Whenever I'm having a bad day, I check the snips and quips. Or my email."

-Alice R.

"Bro, that was so sigma!"

-Daniel H.

"Yeah, that was quite sigma."

-Jonah B.

"Ivo I can't believe you don't know what the test is on."

- Kat R.

"I don't need these grades, the grades need me!"

- Ivo S.

"That's a good question."

-Mr. Meland

"I only ask good questions."

-Mrs. Meland

"Are you Canadian?"

-Eliana B.

"I cannot believe you'd relate me to the 51st state like that. I *bleed* red, white, and blue. There are 10 bald eagles that fly me to school every day."

-Mr. Malchano

"What is Daniel [Yuo] in the play, Clara?"

-Kat R.

"He's the wizard."

-Clara Y.

"There's a wizard in *The Wizard of Oz*?"

-Kat R.

Please send articles, ideas, corrections, or Snips and Quips to:  
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