

The Dumb Ox

February 2026



A New Addition

By: Aurora Predis

This past December, the Aquinas community was thrilled to welcome a new and important member. Head of School Tyler Deschamps and his wife Sarah were excited to announce the birth of their first child, Lucille Patricia Deschamps, on December 30th, 2025. The whole school was overjoyed with the news after Mr. Deschamps sent out an email with the news and pictures of his newborn daughter. In the days following the announcement and snow days, students and faculty alike stopped Mr. Deschamps in the halls to offer their congratulations. Many remarked that it was heartwarming to see their Head of School step into such an important new chapter of life. Several students even joked that baby Lucy might already be the most well-known member of the Aquinas community. Photos of the newborn quickly became a highlight of conversations in classrooms and faculty meetings, spreading smiles across campus. Some students now hope it means Mr. Deschamps will be more willing to give snow days so that he might be able to spend more time with his newborn. The teachers are excited to add another parent to their ranks, as most of them have children or grandchildren.

Before the baby was born, Mr. Deschamps had the faculty participate in a guessing game including guessing the baby’s weight, name, time of birth, and date of birth. Mrs. Repasky added that “He still hasn’t revealed the winner of the game yet!” She also noted that all his nieces and nephews have taken to calling Lucille “Lucy” or “Lulu” and talk about her any chance they can get. When asked about how she felt about her new cousin, Savannah Deschamps noted, “She is one of the sweetest babies ever. She is just adorable, and I love her so much!” As the Aquinas community celebrates this joyful milestone, many are reminded that school is more than just a place of learning—it is a family. The arrival of Lucille Patricia Deschamps marks not only a new beginning for the Deschamps family, but also a special moment shared by the entire Aquinas community.

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Life is a Gift

By: Brigid Mercer

On January 23rd, 2026, hundreds of young men and women from all over the country participated in the annual March for Life held in Washington, D.C.

Established in 1974, one year after *Roe v. Wade*, the March for Life happens annually in Washington, D.C. as a peaceful protest against abortion, and an opportunity to continue fighting for the protection of all human life. Each year, the March has a different theme to emphasize a certain focal point of being pro-life. This year's theme is "Life is a Gift," reminding everyone that all life is given by God and should be cherished. When asked about the importance of the March for Life, Miss Young, teacher advisor to Aquinas' *Vivat Vita* and annual March for Lifer, stated that "I believe that the March is still a vital reminder to the U.S. as a whole that the legalization of abortion in any way is unacceptable." A rally also takes place before each March for Life in which many prominent speakers present to the marchers and share their testimonies about the importance of being pro-life.



This year, over 50 Aquinas students, families, and faculty attended the March for Life. The day started with Mass in the chapel at 6:00 am and a four-hour bus ride. The group then attended the rally, with figures including Vice President J.D. Vance speaking to crowds gathered on the National Mall lawn. The March then began as hundreds of pro-life advocates marched past the U.S. House of Representatives buildings up to the front of the U.S. Capitol and the Supreme Court. Junior Katrina Kedzierski, who attended her first March for Life this year, described it as "such a special opportunity to stand up for the unborn, who aren't able to stand up for themselves." Senior and Co-President of the Aquinas *Vivat Vita* Club Savannah Deschamps shared similar sentiments about this being her first March for Life, expressing that "the March for Life is a reminder that society is built upon the family and each person can only thrive when intimately united with God's family."

The March for Life is a significant experience, because those who march are providing voices for the voiceless and advocating for the protection of all human life, from conception to natural death. The March also serves as an essential reminder that life is a gift from God, beautiful, unique, and unrepeatable.



Underwater Wonderland

By: Alexa Risdon

Aquinas Academy high school students dove into a great time this year at the “Under the Sea” winter dance. The prefects worked extra hard to plan and decorate for the winter dance this year so that students could have a fun night. Myah Gaydosz was “pleasantly surprised with the decorations for the winter formal,” and commended the prefects for their hard work. Brad Moore, a senior and artist, felt immersed in the “best decorations I’ve seen in the gym so far.” Freshman Alaina Howe mentioned the gym was “completely transformed; there were lights, bubbles and jelly fish everywhere.”



Myah also mentioned that the music randomly stopped, but she and her friends made the most of it and “started singing the national anthem. Everyone joined in and by the time we stopped singing, the music was fixed.” The DJ was hit or miss for most people, but Becca Guillen, a senior, “loved that he actually took our requests unlike other DJ’s.” Brad also loved the DJ, explaining, “He didn’t annoy the crowd by constantly talking,” and he “loved making so many people laugh when they played songs from Tiktok and Beauty and a Beast,” because of his energetic and ridiculous dance moves.

Overall, high school students had an amazing time at the winter dance, with the deep-sea theme immersing everyone in waves of fun.

War is Over! (Midterms are Done)

By: Caitlyn Abbett

To celebrate the end of midterms and the feast day of Saint Aquinas, the prefects put together Aquinas Academy’s annual Spirit Week, consisting of themed dress-down days, games, and a talent show. Though the week was cut short due to the snowstorm, the festivities continued into early February.

To start the week off, the theme ‘Merica Monday consisted of a red, white, and blue dress down day, along with a game to win the most bead necklaces, with a Sheetz gift card as the prize. The high schoolers faced each other in countless rounds of rock-paper-scissors, where the winner earned the loser’s beads. Sophomore Gianni Flati dominated as champion, scoring over 50 beads. “I couldn’t have done it without my chums and associates,” he admits. “I won a lot of matches, but my squad definitely helped me pull through with the win.”



Tuesday’s dress-down was character day, where students could dress up as their favorite movie stars, either as a group or individuals. There was a wide range of costumes, varying from *Zootopia* and *Peanuts*, to *Z-O-M-B-I-E-S* and *Top Gun*. As a bonus, the students had the opportunity of purchasing beverages at Tom’s Coffee Truck, which provided both hot and iced coffee in many flavors, as well as fruit refreshers.

Wednesday’s competition showed which of the four colored teams could wear the outfit with the most amount of their color. Red team dominated with 626 different articles. Aquinas also hosted their annual talent show, with a variety of acts for both high school and middle school to enjoy. Senior Abi Irvin sang *From the Start* by Laufey with Felicity Koble on the piano. Jonah Burchill and Lara Hainan performed a classic swing dance. “I was very impressed with all the acts,” Mrs. Mitros commented. “I knew that Jonah and Lara could swing dance, but their talent really blew me away!”

Thursday had a more light-hearted theme, where students could choose between dressing like Colonel Sanders or Adam Sandler, most choosing the latter. Unfortunately, the weather stalled the ice skating day, which will be rescheduled to a later date.

Friday ended the week with blue and gray school spirit outfits and a pep rally to wrap up the spirit week. Alexa Risdon expressed, “I love watching the players run through the banner and the Crusader mascot hyping everyone up. It’s so nice to see the whole student body cheering on their friends.”

Aquinas’ Spirit Week is always a fun highlight of the new year and a nice reward after the end of the exam period. Students and faculty are amused by both the competitions and the hilarious outfits seen throughout the week, enjoying the annual tradition and the Aquinas community.

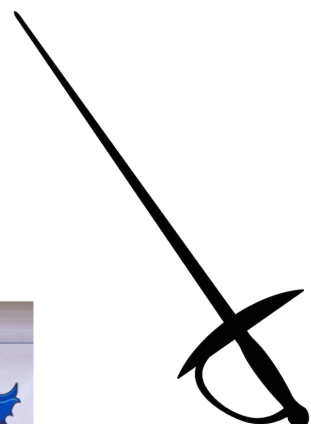
Snowy Sports

By: Lucy Flynn

In spite of frosty conditions this winter, Aquinas' three winter sports teams have had successful seasons. Jack Hoerster, captain of the fencing team, has high hopes for this season, but worries about how the team will do after this year. "I think this season is going to go well and we have a good team this year, but I'm worried it's going to be rough next year since so many seniors are leaving." One of his favorite memories as a senior on the team was "going to the Milkshake Factory with the team after a tough match." He enjoys his time on the team a lot and hopes that fencing will continue to grow in popularity. The fencing team is so much fun, and their matches are exciting to watch!

The boys' basketball team has had an amazing season, and the seniors continue to have high hopes for the team. Henry Hynds says "I think the team is looking very solid this year, and I'm excited to see how far we can go in the playoffs, and hopefully states, "We started off slow, but we're playing a lot better right now, which is really good heading into the end of the regular season and section games."

The girls' basketball team has also had success this season. They won their section and have an undefeated record! "Being part of the Crusader Corner while a freshman made a three pointer or Tess Duer scored her 1000th point was amazing!" Senior Becca Guillen states. "We have gotten to know each other very well both on and off the court. This helps us trust each other more on the court and bonds our team together." She loves the girls more than anything, and cannot wait for the season to continue as they head to the playoffs as the number one seed.



Quantities of Quarter 3 Clubs

By: Laila Tuffiash

Aquinas Academy is over halfway through the school year, but high schoolers are still coming up with amazing and creative club ideas. Some clubs are continuing, such as Mr Kurzawski's pizza club, where students sample pizzas from different pizzerias across the city and review them on Mr. K's pizza grading scale. The baking club, where someone brings in a different homemade baked good every week also continues in quarter 3. In addition to the clubs that are continuing, there are many new creative ideas that student club leaders have come up with this quarter. Some of these clubs are larger, such as badminton club, where students play badminton in the gym, and Italian food club, where students enjoy different Italian cuisine and fellowship every meeting.

There are also other, smaller clubs. Seniors Maggie McBride and Lucy Flynn are running a small book club where members hang out and discuss the books they are reading. Lucy Flynn shared that "Book club is a very small club where we talk about all the different books we like over a game of pool. It's so much fun to discuss the drama in books while playing a fun game as well." No matter what club you chose to participate in this quarter, Aquinas Academy students have so many fun, creative options to choose from.



A Mid-Winter's Shakespeare Contest

By: Elise Metzler

But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Aquinas' student actors the sun. Every year, 5th-12th graders compete in a city-wide competition performing scenes and monologues from Shakespeare's plays. Seven groups from the high school performed on Wednesday, February 4th, while groups from the middle school performed on Thursday, February 12th.

To prepare for the competition, groups memorized and blocked scenes from the notoriously difficult playwright. However, Shakespeare offers plenty of variety with his plays. Students were not just picking from "stuffy" tragedies, but had the opportunity to explore Shakespeare's romantic, comedic, and fantastical plots. From historical drama *Julius Caesar* to fantasy-filled *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the literary and literal swordplay of *Macbeth*, Aquinas students put on a display not only of their own talents, but also the variety of Shakespeare's works.

In the end, students enjoyed the opportunity to act and perform at the O'Reilly Theater. Jonah Burchill shares, "I love going down to the O'Reilly with my friends and learning about the scenes and characters we act as." Over 1,000 students from 80 schools participated in this year's competition.



A group of Aquinas 7th graders was not only called back to the Showcase of Finalists, but ultimately won the Showcase in the Lower Scene Division. Actors Teddy Burchill, Nick Crawford, Ethan Mullican and John Paul Richthammer performed a scene from *Romeo and Juliet*. 21 Aquinas students also received an Honorable Mention.

Overall, Aquinas is very proud of the students who persevered despite the snowstorm that cut practice time short for the high school. Mrs. Mullican, who coordinates the competition for middle and high school students, notes, "I appreciate the time parents and teachers put in to coach the students. Seeing first-time performers and coaches shine made this year particularly memorable. The middle and high school students inspired me with their talent and enthusiasm." Congratulations to all the students who competed, and good luck to any students going to finals!

Keeping Up with the Crusaders:

By: Aarona Casas

Featuring Mrs. Maglio

Founded in 1996, Aquinas Academy will celebrate its 30th birthday this year! Birthdays are a special occasion for both reflecting on the past and looking forward to the great things that await in the future.

In these three decades, Aquinas has grown both as an institution and as a community. When its doors first opened, Aquinas Academy consisted of one building alone. What is now the “preschool building” used to serve as classrooms for students between 9th-12th grade, the basement of which functioned both as a classroom and a cafeteria. Since 2023, the school has consisted of three connected buildings: a three-floor High School building, a Lower and Middle School building, and the Rhodora, which accommodates the school gymnasium, and is connected to the weight room, band room and two art classrooms located under the school chapel. Aquinas’s first graduating class was in 2001 and consisted of one senior. Twenty-five years later, 38 seniors will be graduating this May.

Although Crusaders may part in separate ways after graduation, they will always be united by their time at Aquinas. Mrs. Maglio, an English teacher from 1997 to 2019, has returned to the High School as Mrs. Whetzel’s substitute. She has dedicated the second semester classes to St. Peregrine, that he may intercede for Mrs. Whetzel in her recovery. During her time at Aquinas, Mrs. Maglio saw the school grow from a small group of students and teachers to an entire community. She shared that, “Aquinas has always been full of truly wonderful students and faculty... the focus has always been about seeing souls in our classroom, and I genuinely think that this is what makes Aquinas transcend the normal atmosphere of a school. It has been fun to watch it grow from our tiny little, rented classrooms from St. Catherine’s to these gorgeous buildings, full of advanced technology and replete with talented and joyful students.” As she returns, she enjoys telling her junior British Literature class about the differences between the “Old” and “New” Aquinas Academy, and loves hearing how the students describe the changes to the school since she was last here.

As Aquinas enters a new decade in 2026, the community looks forward to many more blessings and growth, while remembering the past that has made the present possible.



Who is Mr. Kurzawski?

By: Grace Chrobak

From lessons to prayers, Deacon Kurzawski's calling has exceeded the classroom. He asserts that three important things led him to becoming a deacon in the Ukrainian Byzantine Rite: calling from God, influence by family, mentors, and teachers, and finally, life experiences.

First, he was answering a call from God. He said that he “discovered and sustained through prayer” that he was called to his vocation. Deacon Kurzawski stated: “I truly believe it is impossible to discern or remain faithful to a vocation without daily and disciplined prayer life. My time in the seminary was on and off over nearly twenty years, during that time I saw many good and holy men enter formation and later leave. They did not fail. Rather, they discerned that God was calling them to a different vocation, one not at the altar. Prayer is where clarity is found.”

Second, he said he was influenced by “...family, mentors, and teachers.” Deacon Kurzawski went on and expressed that “God often speaks to us through the people closest to us. First, it was my parents and siblings, and later my wife. Having family members consistently remind you that God may be calling you to serve the church in a unique way is often speaking through them.”

Third, he voiced that his life experiences also played an important role. He stated “Working as a hospice chaplain, accompanying people who were dying and supporting their families, put everything into perspective. I would also say that my time as a coach and teacher had a major impact on my vocation. I began to realize that we are always learning, especially about God, and that when we start to think we have all the answers, He humbles us. Sports are especially good at teaching this. The textbook answers often do not work in real time, and you are forced to adapt, listen, and guide people toward a better way. Ministry works the same way.”

He later added his favorite part of being a deacon was that his role gives him “the opportunity to show my students and players that ordained ministry is not about perfection. Priests and deacons are human. We have emotions. We grow. My players would be the first to tell you that I can push them, and sometimes get frustrated, but I hope they know it comes from love and a desire to see them become the best version of themselves.”

All in all, Deacon Kurzawski draws on life experiences as a deacon to aid him in teaching and coaching. He continues to make a positive impact on all people he encounters, especially those in our Aquinas community. Embracing life's twists and turns can lead to a fulfilling life.



I Survived My Trip to NYC

By: Jules Shemer

On February 13th, Aquinas Latin students visited New York City to attend a national Latin Conference, “Living Latin in NYC,” with fellow Latin scholars.

“Living Latin in NYC,” hosted by The Paideia Institute, is an annual two day conference for students and teachers which focuses on the ancient languages, Latin and Greek. This conference allows the attendees to explore and practice these languages in a classroom setting.

Latin expert Ms. Young gives insight on how the field trip idea began: “In the spring of 2024, I was able to attend my first *Living Latin in New York City* conference. I had so much fun that I came for a second year in 2025.” While she was there she dreamed of bringing Aquinas students there as well: “I wasn't sure if it was tenable, but I approached Mrs. Whetzel with the idea, and she was enthusiastic! Everything has been slowly falling into place. Mr. Thornburgh very graciously agreed to be the second chaperone on the trip and is so enthusiastic for the adventure as well as helping to plan the trip with his wonderful ideas.”

A total of nine Aquinas high school students attended the event. Among them, sophomore Peter Koble expressed his expectations of “growing in appreciation for the complexity and intricacies of the ancient language and experiencing it spoken in a modern setting firsthand.” Senior Zander Beaven commented, “I am very excited to go to New York and experience Latin in a unique setting. It will be interesting to meet people who love and will share their passion for such a niche language.”

Upon completion of the trip, sophomore Annette Bentivegna recounts her experience of the conference: “It was incredible! It was really cool to see ordinary people brought together by Latin. Honestly, my favorite part was just walking through New York! I would definitely go again.”

“The Living Latin” is a wonderful chance for students to broaden their current understanding of Latin and Greek. The Aquinas Latin community hopes there will be many more trips to NYC in the future.



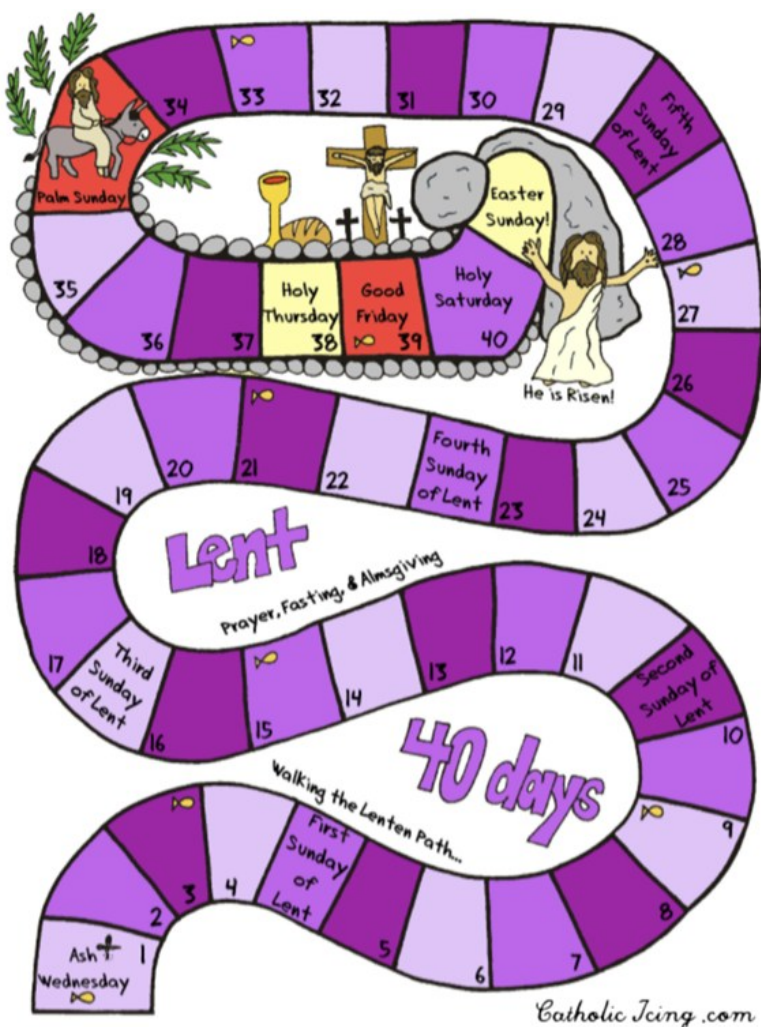
Living Out Lent

By: Katrina Kedzierski

Lent is the liturgical season in the Church where people prepare for Easter by praying, fasting, and almsgiving. Its history is found in the Bible, where Jesus fasted and prayed for forty days. Lent is observed in different ways by different people. For example, many churches hold fish fries, because not consuming meat on Fridays is a tradition to facilitate fasting. Often, more opportunities for the sacrament of Reconciliation are offered as well.

Aquinas Academy celebrates Lent with ashes on Ash Wednesday and Stations of the Cross on Fridays for the lower school. This year, two high school seniors, Louis Bentivegna and Sam Duer, have started a group of high school boys to keep each other accountable in their Lenten practices and grow closer to each other and God. Additionally, many teachers have their own traditions, with their classes, families, or parishes. For example, Deacon Kurzawski is a Ukrainian Byzantine Rite Catholic and calls the 40-day period before Easter "the Great Fast." He shares that, "The Great Fast is about discipline, humility, and putting Christ back at the center of our lives."

Some families may add extra prayers or ways of service and giving. For example, Tabitha Ridings commented, "During Lent my family tries to put a special emphasis on praying the rosary together as often as we can." Still more may volunteer their time by helping at a fish fry at their parish. However you choose to observe Lent, be sure to implement ways to pray, fast, and give, and have a blessed Lent!



Better-for-You Banana Bread

By: Abigail Irvin

One of the most important things we do everyday is eat. A healthy diet keeps the body and brain functioning as well as prevents malnutrition and diseases. It is essential to eat foods that promote nourishment, stable energy, growth, and immune support. I created this healthy banana bread recipe to keep me full and energized before sports and workouts. It's the perfect on the go snack, packed with protein and nutritious ingredients, guaranteed to keep you satisfied.

Recipe:

Serving size: 12 banana bread squares

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cup old fashioned oats
- ¼ cup protein powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- Pinch of sea salt
- 2 eggs
- ⅓ cup of powdered monk fruit, stevia sweetener, or maple syrup
- ¼ cup peanut butter
- Splash of vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp vegetable or canola oil
- 2 overripe bananas, mashed
- Chocolate chips



Instructions:

Step 1. Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Lightly grease an 8x8 inch pan.

Step 2. Blend oats in a blender or food processor until fine flour, about 1 minute.

Step 3. In a medium bowl, combine the oat flour, protein powder, baking soda, salt, sweetener, peanut butter, vanilla, and oil.

Step 4. Stir in eggs and bananas until well blended. If the bananas are not yet ripe, place them in the oven for 15 minutes at 350°F. The outside will turn black, but the inside will be ripe. Fold in your desired amount of chocolate chips.

Step 5. Pour batter into the prepared loaf pan. Optional: garnish with more banana slices and sea salt.

Step 6. Bake in the preheated oven until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 20 minutes. Cool and then enjoy!

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

"Angel hair is like the skinny queen of the pasta world." -Elizabeth B.

walking into band with Caitlyn
"I brought my emotional support animal!"
-Abi I.

"I looked at my vocab book." -Elizabeth B.

"Did you open the cover?" -Katrina K.

"No. But I thought about it."

on movie character day "I can't believe the first ever throat blessing I'm giving is to Charlie Brown, a minion, and the Kardashians"
-Deacon K.

"One time my dad found money on the ground and then put it in a charity box. I was like dude, I could've used that money to buy a popsicle." -Lucy F.

"Can you think of a time when you were deceived as a child but fully believed it?" -Deacon K.

"When I was little, my grandmother told me if I put my elbows on the table, I would kill the table fairies" -Abi I.

the MINUTE Zander got back from a week in Florida
"Where's my money?" -Ava L.

"You're very violent today Mrs. Meland." -Caitlyn A.

"That's what happens when everyone gets snacks except me" -Mrs. Meland

"When you go to college, I'll be your Pocket Pete. I'll come out whenever you want me. And when you don't"
-Peter Koble

announcement "Can all high school boys come to the gym to help move chairs"

"Alright gentlemen, it's time to be *chair*-itable." -Ivo S.

Writer's Favorite:

Hear Me Out

Abigail: Alexander Hamilton

Alexa: Ferdinand the bull

Aarona: The bear from Duolingo

Aurora: Nick Wilde from Zootopia

Brigid: Director Krenic from Rogue One

Caitlyn: Aslan from Narnia

Felicity: Kermit the Frog

Grace: The ocean from Moana

Elise: JFK

Laila: Martin from Wild Kratts

Lara: WALL-E from WALL-E

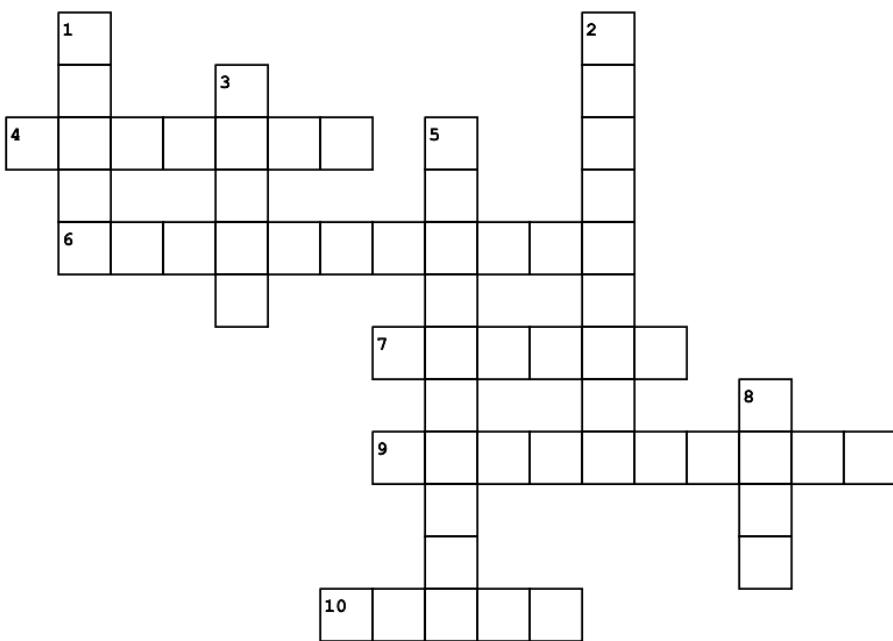
Lucy: Doc Hudson from Cars

Jack: EVE from WALL-E

Katrina: Magic Carpet from Aladdin

Jules: Tai Lung from Kung Fu Panda

Love is in the Air



Across:

4. Prom Could be an Example of This
6. Birds of a Feather Stay Together
7. A Type of Movie
9. The Aquinas Field Hockey Team Sold These
10. Violets are Blue

Down

1. Be Still My Beating...
2. A Taylor Swift Song
3. You Exchange This
5. An Ideal Gift for Your Sweetheart
8. Going on a...

Across: 4. Dancing, 6. Turtledoves, 7. Romcom, 9. Candygrams, 10. Roses
Down: 1. Heart, 2. LoveStory, 3. Gifts, 5. Chocolates, 8. Date



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