

The Dumb Ox

September 2026

From Classrooms to Camping

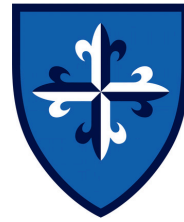
By: Aurora Predis

The annual high school retreat has taken place for as long as many students can remember. This year it was held at Jumonville Retreat Center and was a fun and relaxing way to kick off the school year.

The theme of this year's retreat was authenticity. On the first day, before the high schoolers left the Aquinas campus, they listened to brief talks by each prefect on authenticity and how to be authentic in the light of each of their prefectures. Once students arrived at Jumonville they headed to the main hall and gathered for a teacher panel consisting of Doña, Mr. Kuniega, and Mrs. Mitros. Each teacher discussed authenticity again, explaining how they fulfill it in each of their own lives in and out of school. The next day, students heard from a student panel consisting of Aarona Casas, Isaac Rogers, Oggie Pribich, and Morgan Long about the transition into Aquinas at different grade levels and how they kept their authenticity at Aquinas.

The adventure activities were exciting as well with rock climbing, axe throwing, a nine square and gagaball tournament, and a nature hike. Along with the fun activities there was Mass, Adoration, Confession, and free time for the high school students to bond and get to know one another better. For many of the students, the view from the cross at the top of the hill was a fixation and remembered long after the hike through the woods and up the hill. When asked what his favorite part of the retreat was, junior Andrew Lesnefsky replied, "The view from the top of the cross was really awesome and I loved spending time with the guys." The next morning, the students got to do either the activity or hike they had not done the day before. When asked about the hike and his opinion on it, Freshman Max Predis noted, "The hike was a lot of fun and it was great to get in some extra cross country practice."

Overall the retreat was an experience that the entire high school enjoyed together!



**AQUINAS
ACADEMY**
OF PITTSBURGH

Editors

Brigid Mercer

Elise Metzler

Publisher

Aarona Casas

Writers

Annette Bentivegna

Matt Bauer

Thomas Bird

John Dolan

Sam Ennis

Katrina Kedzierski

Anthony Keane

Peter Koble

Matt McGrath

Lily O'Neill

Aurora Predis

Megan Policicchio

Tabby Ridings

Gabriella Sciulli

Mackenzie Sparrow

Claire Urban



A Saint in Your Corner

By: Matt McGrath

Saint Joseph of Cupertino: Patron Saint of Test Takers

In high school it can be very easy to think grades are all that matter; however, God often takes time to remind us that intelligence is not the only thing that is important. St. Joseph of Cupertino was born, surprisingly, in Cupertino, Italy, in 1603. From the beginning of his life it seemed that the world was working against him. He was born in the shed because his house and effects were being sold off. From his earliest moments, Joseph struggled to pay attention and remember things. Additionally, he would have “fits of abstraction” where he would drop whatever he was doing and stare off into space, much to the confusion of everyone around him. Due to his inability to learn, Joseph was sent to apprentice under a carpenter, which he also struggled to comprehend.

At 17 he attempted to join a monastery, only to be rejected by all but one, who took him in to help with chores and to see how he would perform. This first contact with the monks would not go over well, as in all past jobs, he struggled to understand concepts and had fits of abstraction, frustrating the monks around him to the point that he was expelled. Absolutely crushed by this, Joseph turned to his uncle who was a higher up in a local monastery and got accepted there, working in the stable.

It was in this monastery that St. Joseph’s life began to turn around, as he was quickly noticed by others for his cheerful demeanor, humility, and his willingness to work and help others. These traits also helped him connect with the poor members of town, winning the respect of the monks, who allowed him to apply for the priesthood. Learning was still a challenge to Joseph, and he had to take an exam before ordination.

However, Providence would be on Joseph’s side. There was one passage in John’s gospel that Joseph possessed an odd comprehension of, and he was fortunately asked on his exam simply to expound on that passage alone by a bishop who had no knowledge of his proficiency. During his second examination, the people quizzed before him gave such excellent answers that the bishop simply decided to not quiz the rest of the candidates and ordained all of them.

In school, it is easy to worry about grades and your future, but the story of St. Joseph has a different message. Through St. Joseph, God shows that he will always take care of us and find ways to work through our actions, as long as we are willing to let him.

St Joseph of Cupertino, Pray for us!



Getting to Know the New Teachers

By: Annette Bentivegna

Spain, Delaware, Hawaii – this year, our new teachers came from all over the world to work at Aquinas. We are blessed to welcome many new faculty members including six in the high school. Amongst these are Ms. Dieteman, Ms. Cava, and Dr. Turcik, pictured left to right in the photograph.



Coming from Erie, Pennsylvania, is Ms. Dieteman, a cousin to both the Koble and Mercer families. She graduated from Grove City College in 2025 with her Bachelor of Science, majoring in Biology with a post-bachelor in Secondary Education. Ms. Dieteman spent the following year in a student-teaching program through Grove City. She is teaching both Life Science and Pre-Algebra to the seventh graders, along with ninth grade CP Biology class. She is most excited about “being a part of the community.” A cool fact about her is that she loves honeybees!

Ms. Cava, from Delaware, graduated from Duquesne University with a Bachelor of Science, majoring specifically in Environmental Science. Prior to Aquinas, she was a teaching assistant at Glen Montessori. She is excited to get to know her students, “to form relationships throughout the year, and work with excellent teachers.” Ms. Cava is teaching Introductory Chemistry and Algebra I to the eighth graders in addition to her tenth grade CP Chemistry class. Her favorite movies are the Sherlock Holmes duology starring Robert Downey Jr.

Originally from Ligonier, Dr. Turcik returns to the area after three years teaching in Spain and another nine years in Hawaii. She received her undergraduate degree from Washington and Jefferson, triple majoring in History, Spanish, and Secondary Education. Additionally, she earned her Masters of the Arts of Teaching from the University of Pittsburgh and her Doctorate of Education from Baylor. She is currently teaching eighth grade U.S. History, Persuasive Writing, and Intro Spanish. Dr. Turcik is also teaching West Civ II to the juniors. She is looking forward to “getting to know the personalities of the students, the dynamic of the classroom, and helping kids grow academically.” By the time this article is published, she will be married!

If you see any of these wonderful additions to the Aquinas community, say hello and perhaps even “Congratulations!” to Dr. Turcik. Welcome to Aquinas Academy!

Father Thomas Skamai- A Fascinating New Aquinas Staff Member

By: Matt Bauer

This year the school has gained many new staff, one of whom is Father Thomas Skamai. This year Father Skamai will teach 10th grade theology, celebrate Mass, hear confessions, and do whatever else is asked of him. Some of his favorite aspects of 10th grade theology class include all his students and finding Christ in obscure Old Testament passages.

In 2013, Father Skamai became convinced he should become a priest. It was the summer of his freshman year in college, and after he was called, he knew it was a great calling in life. In 2022, Father Thomas Skamai was ordained a priest with the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Before coming to Aquinas, he was chaplain at St. Margaret Hospital. Additionally, he is also serving as one of the chaplains for Pitt, Carnegie Mellon, and Chatham.



Regarding his experience on the Jumonville trip, Fr. Thomas says, “Jumonville was awesome. It was great to step away from the busy state of our usual day-to-day life, enjoy the beauty of nature, and spend some extra time in prayer. As a priest, it was an immense blessing to get a glimpse of how God is working in the lives of our high school students - their devotion was truly inspiring.”

Also, Fr. Thomas loves celebrating Mass here at Aquinas, mostly because of the love that the school has for the Eucharist. He states, “It is refreshing to see so many young people approaching Our Lord with such faith.” He also loves the singing here, because it lifts his heart to the Lord. Fr. Thomas thinks Mass in the gym has been fine, but he is most definitely looking forward to having a new and beautiful chapel next year.

Lastly, a quote that Father Thomas loves is one from St. Pius IX. St. Pius IX told St. John Henry Newman when, after his conversion, he was heading back to a anti-Catholic England to establish an Oratory: “Be strong in war, do battle with the Ancient Serpent, receive the Eternal Kingdom.” This quote reminds us that we should face adversity head-on here at Aquinas.

Striving For Success: Girls' Sports

By: Thomas Bird

Aquinas athletics includes six fall girls' teams - soccer, field hockey, golf, cross country, tennis, and volleyball. Three teams will be covered in this edition, and the other three will be covered next month.

The Aquinas girls' soccer team, led by Macy Thiel and Lucy Keverline, although off to a rough start, has great hopes for the future. The 2026 team is the youngest ever, with Lucy being the only senior on the team. This situation provides a wonderful opportunity to teach new players the beloved Aquinas tradition, while still staying a competitive team. A freshman player says, "It's going to be a tough year, and we're going to learn a lot about how we play together as a team." The girls' team has recently won their first game, and has high hopes to win more.

Unlike the soccer team, the Aquinas golf team is co-ed. The two girls on the team, Mackenzie Sparrow and Kate Gillespie, make up a key element. "Kate and I," says Mackenzie, "have shot our lowest scores these last couple of months." Mackenzie has recently brought home two 51's, a very good score. She qualified to compete sixth in the Aquinas line-up at a recent meet.

With their first meet on September 8th, the Aquinas girls' cross country team is shaping up to great success. Led by Tess Austin, they have had the past few weeks to practice and get themselves ready. With many returning runners and many runners contributing to other Aquinas teams, they are looking forward to a great season of success and growth.

The teams have done great so far, and are sure to continue to do so. Good luck ladies, and keep on winning!



Spotlight on Boys' Sports

By: John Dolan

The 2026 fall sports season is underway, and both the boys' soccer and cross country teams started their seasons after losing their biggest stars.

The boys' soccer team is coming off a great season where they won their first playoff game in ten years, led by scoring record holder Marco Anselmino and five other starting seniors. This year's team, coached by Mat Anselmino and led by captains John Dolan, Mark Rounding, and Lorenzo Anselmino, now has six new varsity players. The team started the season with a difficult 6-0 loss against OLSH. Despite the loss, the players kept their heads up and focused on the next game. Tommy Edwards said, "We only had 10 good minutes of play in our first game, but despite our loss we kept our heads up and kept a positive mentality for our next match." The team responded with a 3-1 win against Freedom on Thursday, September 10. Goals were scored by Lorenzo Anselmino, John Dolan and Zach Hartle. Last season proved what the team could do, and the Crusaders hope to continue working hard in order to make another playoff run. When asked about the win against Freedom and the rest of the season, Junior goalie Oggie Pribich said, "I think we bounced back well and showed what we are capable of for the rest of the season."

The boys' cross-country team is also ready for a strong season. Coached by Mike Grese, the runners spent their summer putting in loads of work. Most of the team logged between 150 and 300 miles from June through August running through some of the toughest hills in North Park and their longest runs ranged from eight to 14 miles. The boys lost one of their top runners, Brad Moore, from last season, but they return with a strong group of sophomores and have added several talented freshmen. Sophomore Andrew Deem and freshmen Max Predis and Isaac Vangura have been competing for the team's top spot. They have pushed each other during training, but they have kept a strong team-first mentality. When asked about the season so far, freshman Max Predis said, "It's been a strong season, maybe one of the strongest ever." Roman Spagnolo, Giancarlo Josephs, Lucas Kibler, Regan Carroll, Peter Koble, David Howes, and Luke Schellhaas could also play important roles this season. With so many young and talented runners, the boys' cross country team is one to keep an eye on.



Carnival Night Opens a Year of Prefect Events

By: Sam Ennis

Students gathered for the Crusader Carnival night, which occurred on the Friday before the start of the new school year. Taking place in the side lot, the event offered snowcones, popcorn, and yard games like volleyball and spikeball for students to enjoy. It provided an opportunity for students to reconnect with friends and for new students at Aquinas to meet their peers and see what Aquinas is like. Freshman Barbara Peniche said, “The prefects are one of a kind and really made my first event warm and comfortable.” Junior Zach Yohe also said that “It was a good time to meet new people and see old friends.” The Carnival was a wonderful start to the year, and really seemed to serve its purpose in bringing the students together.

The prefects have also planned the two upcoming events. The next event is a drive-in movie night, featuring Spider-Man: Homecoming. After the movie, the theme for the Homecoming dance will be announced. Two weeks afterwards is Color Wars, which is a yearly Aquinas high school tradition. This is a fun, competitive event which has solidified itself as part of the Aquinas calendar and has been a fan favorite.

Over the summer, prefects worked hard to plan a fantastic 2026-2027 school year, brainstorming event ideas on retreat and back at Aquinas. In charge of planning the prefect events is the Activities Prefect Myah Gaydosz, who said, “Obviously we want to make the prefect events really fun, well attended, and enjoyed. The Carnival was a great way to start, and gave a great preview of what our prefect board will continue to accomplish for the rest of the school year.” Overall, the prefect board has done an excellent job so far, and we are excited for the prefect events to come!



Adventures in Ohio: Two Summer Faith Experiences

By: Katrina Kedzierski

Every summer, nearly 3,000 people gather in the small town of Steubenville, Ohio to hear speakers, participate in Eucharistic Adoration, and roam about the campus of Franciscan University. The university has put on summer conferences since 1976, making this year their fiftieth anniversary. From June 19-21, thirty-seven students and four faculty members attended this conference and heard speakers present on the theme “Worthy”. Attendees even received a personal video message from Pope Leo! Aquinas alum Ivo Stivoric described it as a “very profound experience” and his younger sister Mary said it contained “lots of surprises, but no sleep.”

Damascus summer camp, previously known as CYSC, also drew many Aquinas students. This camp pairs high adventure activities such as rock climbing, a high ropes course, and paintball with faith activities like talks, prayer ministry, and Adoration. The theme of the week was “Credo,” or “I believe.” Aquinas has a deep connection with this camp, with some alumni even going and serving there for the summer. Freshman Alexandra Robinson described the experience as “really unique” and even shared that she “got to experience God’s love in a way I never had before!” To those considering attending the camp next year, she recommends, “Don’t be scared, and bring clothes you can get messy.”



Oh, The Places You’ll Go By: Mackenzie Sparrow

Leaving just three days after school let out in June, a group of Aquinas students, family, and faculty embarked on a ten-day-long tour of Rome, Pompeii, Naples, Siena, and Florence.

In Rome, students visited numerous historical sites over three days. During the abundant free time, the group visited other historical sites and landmarks. “One of the best parts of the trip was exploring Rome. Before our afternoon tour of the Colosseum, Ms. Fetchko took us around to her favorite places in the city from when she studied abroad, like the Campo dei Fiori and the orange tree garden,” said freshman Regan Carroll. Some highlights from Rome were seeing the Vatican, Colosseum, and the Roman Forum.

From there, the group visited the beautiful Amalfi Coast for another three days. They had a chance to see the Pompeian ruins, enjoyed a day on the beaches of Capri, and even learned how to make a Neapolitan-style pizza. “Pompeii is such a unique and interesting city, it’s been preserved under ash for centuries!” remarked Evelyn Rich, another freshman. “And to imagine it was once a thriving city which we can now look at through what the ash preserved is truly fascinating.” From there, the group enjoyed a free day in Siena, where many saw the Duomo, went shopping, or both!

Finally, the group spent two days in Florence. They enjoyed a tour of the city which showcased the Relias Piazza Signoria and the Cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore and ended with a mini-tour of a local leather shop. The second day was a free day, where many people went shopping at the various leather and jewelry shops, visited the Cathedral, and viewed Michelangelo’s David.

One thing about the trip that many people enjoyed was the family aspect. “I loved how everyone on the trip became like one big family: the amazing chaperones, students, and parents, from the oldest traveler, Nonna (Grandmother of the Josephs), to the youngest, seven year old Giordano Josephs,” reflected Ms. Fetchko, who organized the trip. “It was special to see the big kids take care of the little kids and everyone form friendships that otherwise may not have happened if it weren’t for all of us being in Italy.” Alumna Meghan McGee also thought that the trip was nice “because we got to have a lot of fun and free time and eat some of the most amazing gelato, but also study history and language!” Aquinas now has a new group of international travelers and looks forward to any future voyages.



Cafe-Gymna-Torium-Church

By: Tabitha Ridings

This past summer Aquinas Academy started the long-awaited chapel renovation and construction project. The building will soon feature a 30-foot extension towards Dolan Field along with heating, ventilation, and air conditioning upgrades.

This undertaking is projected to be completed in August of 2027, with the basement classrooms finished a few months prior. Some other exciting new additions to the chapel will be a beautiful altarpiece from Spain and new stained glass windows, similar to the stained glass centerpiece that had been behind the altar in the old chapel. There will also be a choir loft in the back of the church and a much larger seating section with new pews.

Many students are looking forward to the finished project. Current sophomore Elizabeth Bird emphasizes what a large step this is for the school as a whole, saying, “As someone who has seen Aquinas grow for going on 13 years, I know how much we needed this expansion, and I am excited to see so many dreams come to life!”

Despite the construction, Aquinas Academy continues to offer daily mass by celebrating it in the school gymnasium. The school as a whole has already become very respectful when entering the space, not as a place to play but a place to pray. While the gymnasium inherently lacks the visible grandeur and beauty that a real chapel has, the people in it are what help to make it holy. Students put their focus on God, so the space becomes more of a chapel than a room for physical education. This focus, reverence, and respectfulness is why Head of School, Mr. Deschamps, comments “I think it's going really well - the best mass in a gym I've seen in a long time.”

As we await the completion of the chapel, we look forward to continuing this respectfulness towards our Lord and growing in holiness together this school year!



Juniors Go North

By: Lily O'Neill

As juniors, Aquinas students take a trip north to see Shakespearian plays in action. Since 2003, juniors have attended the Stratford Shakespeare Festival in Ontario Canada. The festival was founded in 1953 by Tom Patterson with the goal of giving the public access to Shakespeare's plays, though it eventually branched out to include plays from many writers. This year the junior class had the opportunity to experience three plays: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The King James Bible Play*, and *The Tempest*. Of these, only *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is read in the Aquinas curriculum, so these plays were a brand new experience for many. Not only did students watch the performances, but they also got to try their hand at performing through a stage combat class. Juniors learned how to fake punch, slap, and choke their friends as if they were actors in a violent play.

The trip to Stratford is not just about the theater, but also about growing in community with classmates. Juniors had the opportunity to walk around Stratford and experience the cozy town. Sofia Peniche enjoyed time with her friends saying, “My favorite part of the trip was running across the highway with Mr. Burchill and my friends while getting honked at.” Allie Swift's favorite part had to do with the plays. She said, “My favorite part was *A Midsummer Night's Dream* because it was the best play by far, the acting was superb, and the costumes were beautiful.”

As a school trip, the Stratford experience is not only fun but educational. Mrs. Whetzel, the main organizer of the trip, notes that this trip fosters love and appreciation of the arts. She says, “It has been an Aquinas tradition for many years to take students to Stratford to experience high-quality live theater so they can grow in their love for and appreciation of Shakespeare after so many years of reading the plays in class.”

Whether students were watching plays, learning stage combat, or hanging out with friends, it is undoubtedly true that the long trip north was a worthwhile experience for this year's junior class.



Seniors' Last Park Job

By: Megan Policicchio

In the Aquinas student parking lot, you can find the one and only Gojo from the anime Jujutsu Kaisen and a beautiful whale shark swimming. During the month of August, the senior class began their first activity as a group: painting senior parking spaces.

Seniors could paint their parking spaces on August 17th, 20th, or 21st. Most seniors showed up on August 20 and 21 due to heavy rain at the beginning of the week. Alice Dingle, the art prefect, worked hard in the previous weeks to set up such a fun week for the seniors. "It never took too long to set up, as Ms. Fetchko and Mr. Salinas was a massive help the entire week," Alice said. Her hard work allowed about twenty eight seniors to let their creativity shine and paint their own story in a parking spot.

While many students painted something creative related to their interests, some seniors went above and beyond for their space. Eli McWilliams spent time outside of the hours Alice had given to finish his parking space. It took a whole week to make something so meticulous and artistic. He painted Gojo from the very famous anime Jujutsu Kaisen, and noted, "I wanted to do something really ambitious and I didn't really know if I could pull it off, but I tried and I felt like I could make a really good design using his domain and a cool caption that is a pun because it is my parking space." Another space that showed a person's true colors was Carly Bezila's space. She painted a very beautiful blue space with a whale shark in the middle in two days. Carly had a bit of a hard time due to the limited supply of paint, but she persevered and finished her space.

Though the painting project was thoroughly enjoyable, there were a few cons. There was a paint shortage two days in a row and some students forgot to clean up. In the future, other art prefects will have to take control of the paint and make sure that seniors do not use whole buckets. This was an overall stimulating activity, and all the seniors look forward to the next!



Here Comes the Sun

By: Claire Urban

A gorgeous swirl of vibrant color greeted the senior class of 2027 at 6:25 AM on Tuesday September 8th for the annual senior sunrise.

For many years hosting a "Senior Sunrise" has been a big tradition for the current graduating class. Each year, the class waits in anticipation for this memorable kickoff to an amazing senior year. Senior sunrise is a wonderful way to start the day on a high note, hang with friends, and get great pictures of God's beautiful creation.

Normally the class' get-together is hosted on the renowned Dolan Field. However this year, due to the field renovations currently taking place, this annual event was held on the hill behind the John Vento Flag Retirement Plaza in North Park, just five minutes away from the school. A sign that says "Senior Sunrise" and their graduating year, "2027," was created by some of the class, and groups of friends posed with it with the sun peaking up in the background. The sign is remade each year and is special to the senior class.

Senior Alice Dingle commented on the event saying, "It was an amazing experience. Having the sun rise shows how we're just getting started as seniors and really tugged at my heartstrings. I'm excited for a good year with the people I grew up with." A favorite memory documented by Tabitha Ridings was "walking up the hill toward my friends when it was still dark and the sun was just beginning to rise." The faculty at Aquinas also have good things to say about the seniors' tradition. Former Head of School, Mrs. Leslie Mitros describes senior sunrise as "a special event uniting the senior class, especially if done early in the school year." She also confirms that this event has been a tradition since 2022 which makes this year's senior sunrise the fifth ever at Aquinas Academy.



Summer of Big Steam

By: Anthony Keane

Millions of people witnessed the rushing of steam, the sound of 1.2 million pounds barreling down the track. This summer, for the first time in 85 years, Union Pacific Big Boy 4014 traveled east of the Mississippi River on a coast-to-coast tour celebrating the 250th anniversary of our country. Union Pacific 4014 was released from the American Locomotive Company in Schenectady, New York, in 1941. Ever since then it has been in home territory out west on Union Pacific rails. In this several-month-long tour, the Big Boy passed through several historic landmarks including the world famous Horseshoe Curve, built by the Pennsylvania Railroad, currently owned by Norfolk Southern Railway.

Several members of the Aquinas community went to see the Big Boy. Bobby O'Mara drove over to Homestead to see it and reflected, "Union Pacific was very considerate to slow it down so I could get a good look, I was surprised at how loud it was, I had to cover my ears."

Julia Santucci, who drove out to Altoona to see it displayed, succinctly stated, "It was big." This observation is unsurprising as the Big Boy is the biggest operational steam locomotive in the world. The Big Boy has an interesting treatment for those who stand too close to the tracks. Big Boy engineer Ed Dickens sprays high pressure steam out the sides of the locomotive, effectively pushing people back and knocking over tripods with cameras. Unfortunately, many of the people who went to see the tour had very poor spatial awareness and did not know how wide the Big Boy really is. Some people went as far as to stand in the middle of the tracks to get photos of the train before jumping out of the way at the last second. In total, the Big Boy tour ended with enough drone crashes to make the Big Boy an official flying ace.



A Nine-To-Five Life Has Ended

By: Gabriella Sciulli

The music industry lost its queen of country music, the fabulous Dolly Parton, at the end of August. Dolly Parton died on August 25th, 2026, at Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center, located in Nashville, Tennessee. Dolly died at the age of eighty, having lived a life focused on assisting others and expanding country music. Her recent battle with breast cancer is suspected to have contributed to her sudden death.



Dolly Parton lived a life of musical success while serving others in her community, especially the youth. In her lifetime, Dolly Parton was named the Queen of Country music. Her greatest hits included "Jolene" (1973), "9 to 5" (1980), and "There Was Jesus" (2019). She is known for having revolutionized the country music industry. Dolly also acted in many films, including *Steel Magnolias* (1989) and *Rhinestone* (1984). Outside of the spotlight, Dolly Parton was also a known humanitarian. She started the Dolly Parton Imagination Library in 1995 to send free books to poor children worldwide to better their education. In addition, the queen also donated millions of dollars to children's hospitals across the country. Despite not being able to have any children herself, she stated in a 1984 interview that she thought of herself as "everyone's mother" to show her deep concern for young people.

Dolly's passing affected people of all walks of life. Although the family has not released much on her sudden death, Dolly's nephew, Brian Seaver, remarked "She (Dolly) died peacefully in Nashville today." Many celebrities in the music industry have paid tribute to Dolly and expressed condolences for the family. Harry Styles played "I Will Always Love You" as a tribute to Dolly during the opening of the show at Madison Square Garden on August 26th. Taylor Swift also praised Dolly's generosity, individuality, and impact on the music industry. At Aquinas, freshman Elena Welch remarked, "She is what an icon of music should be." Elena also praised Dolly's support of education and kindness. The world misses you, Dolly, and thank you for everything!

Breaking Ground: A New Turf Field

By: Peter Koble

The Aquinas community is excited to witness the undertaking of a project on Dolan Field to replace the existing grass with artificial turf. Many have commented on the variety of trucks, materials, and heavy equipment frequenting campus. Although indications of the work are evident, it is difficult to observe all that the project addresses.

Hosting school events on the field has always been challenging with its primary use as an athletic space. Games tear up the grass, deepen uneven surfaces, and sully the ground. This not only makes events more formidable, but hurts athletic matches throughout seasons and drives up maintenance liabilities. The school opted for a turf field to maximize the athletic and communal capabilities of the field for years to come. The preparation for this project has been ongoing over the past eighteen months. It has involved obtaining four permits, jumping regulatory hurdles, and ensuring everything was in order before the new surface could be attached.

The process involves leveling the field and installing extensive stormwater collection infrastructure before any turf can be fastened. Over three hundred truckloads of dirt must be dug out before FieldTurf- the same company contracted for fields at the University of Notre Dame and West Virginia University- can apply the new playing surface. This work is projected to be finished by the middle of October, and should be prepared for use soon thereafter. Mr. Deschamps expressed that he was told that “we’ve had the wettest August on record,” but was assured that the project would be completed on schedule barring unforeseen delays.

The field will have lines printed into the pitch denoting several different sport boundaries. The new athletic logo will be printed together with the ‘AQUINAS CRUSADERS’ moniker. After years of use by varsity teams, the turf surface will degrade mildly and need to be replaced, with Mr. Kayda saying that “with us not having football, I would say fifteen years is a safe bet.” In addition to a new playing surface, an electric scoreboard will be installed. This electric capability also comes with potable water piping to the field. At the present time, the playground will remain as it has been since it was installed in 2002. Future ideas for campus expansion include an auxiliary gymnasium or athletic field, additional parking space, and perhaps a baseball field. Let us all hope that these projects run smoothly.



Snips and Quips

"I turn into a pumpkin after midnight."
- Mrs. Mullican *Mrs. Mullican rests*

"The hour of reckoning is
nigh!" - Todd
* at 11:55 pm*

"Mrs. Mullican! Have you turned
into a pumpkin yet? Mrs.
Mullican!!!" - Todd *at 12am*

"No, Todd, I'm still a
carriage." - Mrs. Mullican

"I think you're
lying to us!"
- Milller R.

"Yeah.
Probably."
- Ms.
McGrath

"BOOM! Now he's a tomato." - Mr. Meland

"Why do you obey your
parents?" - Fredy

"Because I'm not 18."
- Tess A.

"You can only talk down to an
animal." - Elise

"Well, if it's a giraffe..."
- Miller R.

"I don't trust horses. They're big and have funny
teeth." - Mr. Malchano

"If my feet had
eyebrows, I'd be
raising them right
now." - Annette

"If we did this bad
on the first one,
wait until we
actually have to do
Latin!" - Jack S.

Writer's Favorite:

Summer Reading Novel

Brigid: *The Witch of Blackbird Pond*

Elise: *Sense and Sensibility*

Aarona: *Emma*

Annette: *Frankenstein*

Matt B: *Hatchet*

Thomas: *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

John: *He Leadeth Me*

Sam: *Hatchet*

Katrina: *Little Women*

Anthony: *Leave it to Psmith*

Peter: *A Separate Peace*

Matt M: *He Leadeth Me*

Lily: *Fellowship of the Ring*

Aurora: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Megan: *Frankenstein*

Tabby: *Little Women*

Gabriella: *All Quiet on the Western Front*

Mackenzie: *The Adventures of Tom*

Sawyer

Claire: *Little Women*

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

2026 Fall Open
House Dates:

Saturday, October 31
Wednesday, November 11
Saturday, November 14

Find Your
and
at Saint Francis
University.

Career-focused,
High-demand Majors

Focus on Faith,
Research and Service

Vibrant Student Life:
Fine Arts, Esports,
Greek Life, Athletics

*We invite you
to experience
Saint Francis
for yourself.*



Scholarships available for Catholic High School students!

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

francis.edu/visit | (814) 472-3100