



## Sunday Sidelines

January 21, 2018

Dear Families,

Some of you may have seen the article about Aquinas senior, Mary Casamassa, in Friday's Varsity Extra section of the Post-Gazette: <http://www.post-gazette.com/sports/high-school-basketball/2018/01/19/Aquinas-Academy-Mary-Casamassa-boxing-basketball-Alan-Carson-Ryan-Rimsek/stories/201801190020> Mary plays on our Girls' Varsity Team; and she is also a boxer – a sport that her brothers also enjoy. As I started to think about the multi-faceted talents of our students, I thought it might be interesting to share with parents the many and varied extracurricular activities of our students – both school-sponsored and individual pursuits. This list is not exhaustive, but gives some idea of the many activities in which Aquinas students participate.

You may find it interesting that:

- Seventh-grader, Anthony Ferraro wrestles individually for Aquinas.
- Fifteen middle and high school students have taken up fencing at Aquinas.
- Sam Schirra swims for Aquinas (as have his brothers, as well as John Reed, in the past!)
- Many students in grades 5 through 12 are currently rehearsing scenes and monologues to compete in the Pittsburgh Public Theatre Shakespeare Competition in the next month.
- Chess club is overflowing into two classrooms, and some players will have the opportunity to compete at St. Kilian, and again at Aquinas at the beginning of March.
- The Robotics team (ages 9 – 14) were in a regional competition of the FLL at LaRoche college last weekend. Aquinas was represented by two teams (see footnote on the results!)
- Several of our high school students volunteer on a regular basis at local hospitals.
- Some Aquinas Families regularly serve at the local food pantries and serve dinners with various programs for youth and women in need.
- Several of our students have gone on mission trips to Appalachia or other impoverished areas.
- Several of our seniors were presented to Bishop Zubik at the Medallion Ball, and several more of our high school girls are preparing to do so in the upcoming years.
- Our high school mathletes will be participating in the Uber Bowl – an online math competition against other schools – in the next two weeks.
- We are sending a team of middle school students to compete in Math Counts on February 10<sup>th</sup>.
- High School students are preparing to send a team of students to the Energy Bowl – a high school science and math “quiz bowl” competition.

- MANY of our 8<sup>th</sup> graders will represent Aquinas Academy when they present their science projects at the Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science (PJAS) Regional Competition at Duquesne University on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- Behind the Scenes, Katie O'Connell (junior) has been working with her yearbook committee and Mrs. Canzian to publish this year's yearbook.
- The Dumb Ox, our high school newspaper, is published every six weeks by the high school journalism class with Harry Scherer and Reagan Roblaski as co-editors, and Katrina Ortiz as publisher.
- In addition to several students who are cub scouts and boy scouts, we have boys who are in the troops of St. George, and girls who participate in the American Heritage Girls.
- The Honeybees and the Art of Living Girls' Groups meet regularly at Aquinas to learn skills, crafts, and complete service projects.
- Several of our young women are members of Leaders Now International.
- We have students who dance with the Pittsburgh Ballet Theatre.
- We have both boys and girls who perform with local theatre troupes.
- There are many students who are servers, cantors, musicians, choir members, and catechists at their local parishes. Many are active members of their parish youth groups.
- Many of our high school students work part-time jobs.
- In addition to our own band and choir programs, there are several students who are part of selective musical programs like PYCO and other orchestras and ensembles.

We have a wonderfully involved and diverse student body. We are quite proud of the many challenges that our students take on and in every situation, represent us well and with virtue. There are so many situations where other teams, groups, competitors comment on the sportsmanship and virtuous behavior of our students. That is a tribute to their parents and their teachers. Thank you for always encouraging participation and modeling charity and courage for your children!

Ready to meet the challenges of the second semester,  
Leslie Mitros

1234567891011

**<sup>1</sup> 8<sup>th</sup> Graders will have their rescheduled Confirmation Day of Retreat this coming Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>.** The plan remains the same as it would have been on January 5<sup>th</sup>. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students should DRESS UP for the day. The only change is that that, with the first ski trip scheduled for that afternoon, the students will return from the Benedictine Monastery a little earlier in time for the ski bus! Locally, Confirmations begin at the various parishes, some as early as the second week of February. Please keep our 8<sup>th</sup> graders in your prayers as they receive this Sacrament either this spring or in the fall of 9<sup>th</sup> grade, depending on their parish date.

**<sup>2</sup> Because Fr. Matt McClain will be one of the speakers for the Confirmation Retreat, there WILL BE MASS THIS FRIDAY, JANUARY 26<sup>TH</sup>, AT 11:00 IN THE CHAPEL.** All are welcome to attend. There will also be Mass on Friday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> – First Friday!

**<sup>3</sup> Aquinas was well-represented at the March for Life in DC last Friday. We had a full bus of 51 students and 5 teachers. Several other students and families travelled with their parish busses or on their own.** After praying a rosary on the bus, we arrived in Washington in

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time to attend Mass at St. Dominic's, near the National Mall. After the March, we had a few minutes to go to the Botanical Gardens or the Air and Space Museum before boarding the bus to travel back home. It was a pleasure for the adults to spend the day with our students. We met up with some of our alum and saw friends from other parishes. I pray that these young people will always know the importance of respect for life – at all stages and in every encounter and interaction with others! This pilgrimage on behalf of the unborn allows them to see a youthful church that is much bigger than Aquinas, or their Parish, or Pittsburgh, or Pennsylvania!

<sup>4</sup> From the Robotics Club:

**The Aquinas Robotics team competed in the Western PA First Lego League Grand Championship (OPEN Division) on Jan 12/13. 38 teams competed during the two-day event and Aquinas' two teams placed 16 and 25, with special callouts for robot design and sportsmanship.**

Over the past few months the students applied science, technology, engineering and math concepts toward building and programming self-navigating robots in the Aquinas Robotics Lab that solved a series of physical challenges in a 8' x 4' playing field. In addition, they researched a real-world problem and applied their teamwork skills.

Members include: **Andy D'Angelo, Oliver Flynn, Teresa Gates, John Griffith, Hunter Harrison, Adam Mullen, Benjamin Stalder, Patrick Veazey, Giovanni Vella, Celina Whitmer, and AJ Yellin.**

Please watch for future emails regarding upcoming activities and how your students can take part in Aquinas Robotics!

<sup>5</sup> **Our school has the opportunity to purchase the Magnificat and/or Magnifikid magazines ([www.magnificat.com](http://www.magnificat.com)) at a greatly reduced bulk rate for interested families. The yearly subscription price for Magnificat is being offered for \$25.00/year which is almost half off the regular yearly rate of \$44.95.** Magnificat contains the official texts of the daily Mass, morning and evening prayers, and much more. Both men and women have the opportunity to grow in their prayer life through this beautiful guide. The Magnifikid magazine is being offered at a rate of only \$13.00/year versus the regular subscription price of \$34.95. Magnifikid is intended for children aged 6-12 years and includes texts for Sunday Mass, prayers, games, comics and etc. It makes a wonderful gift for Easter, First Holy Communion or for a Godchild. If interested in taking advantage of this amazing discount, please print the **attached order form** and send it into the office as soon as possible. Your magazines will be sent home with your youngest child during the school year. During the summer months, your magazines will be available for you to pick up in the office. Please fill out the attached order form and make checks payable to "Aquinas Academy" and indicate "Magnificat" in the memo line. **\*\*Please note that the deadline to order is Friday, January 26<sup>th</sup>\*\*** If you have any questions, please contact Tina Rossi.

<sup>6</sup> Since we surely have not seen the last of the winter cold, **Aquinas will be assisting with a project of the Catholic Men's Fellowship. They are doing a drive to assist the homeless – primarily homeless men.**

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These are the items that they're looking for:

1. Large heavy coats
2. Jeans of all sizes
3. Boots
4. Gloves
5. Heavy socks
6. Hoodies
7. Thermal tops and bottoms
8. Belts
9. Wool Caps
10. Scarfs
11. Backpacks

These items may be new or used (but in good shape!). **There will be a box in the lower school lobby to collect these items through the first week of February.** Thank you to Helen Ivaska for coordinating collection and pick up!

**<sup>7</sup> Our Spring Open House for prospective families is Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00 to 1:00.** I am attaching the flyer for your convenience in passing it on to others. **Also, please help to promote the Open House by displaying a yard sign in your yard. Signs are available in the main lobby.**

**<sup>8</sup> It's Box Tops Time again!** Please start collecting as many Box Tops as you can! Our "Spring" contest will run from **January 29 – February 23**. The TEAM that collects the most Box Tops at each building level will win a **TEAM Dress-Down Day!** That's right, the Lower School, Middle School, and High School will each have a winning team, provided the team with the most Box Tops has collected a minimum of 500 Box Tops. Please send in any Box Tops that have not expired with your child between **January 29 – February 23**. Team colored bins will be set out in each building to collect the Box Tops. Clipping Box Tops is easy to do - just look for pink Box Tops on participating products, cut them out, and send them to school with your child. *Make sure to check the expiration date!*

**<sup>9</sup> Please check you sons' coats. One of our 8th grade middle school students is missing a brand new North Face ski coat since beginning of December that he had for one day.** It is a men's large size, medium blue and grey with a dark navy down zip in liner. There is no name in the coat since it was the first day he wore it. He last remembers wearing it in his computer class in the lower school building. We have looked all over the school for the coat and think that maybe someone may have worn it home by accident. Please check your son's coats and if you think you may have found it please return it to Cindy in the main office.

**<sup>10</sup> Thank you for your generosity for last Thursday's Dress Down Day. Students donated \$900 to benefit The Anna Seethaler Hospital (TASH) in Oaxaca, Mexico.** I will try to arrange to have Fr. Scott out to offer Mass in February so that we can present that check in person! It has been a great experience to have the older students submit possible charities (that are then screened for appropriateness and percentage of funding that is received as direct aid), and then vote on the recipient for the quarter. More in Quarter 3!

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<sup>11</sup> Important Upcoming Dates/Event.

Friday, Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> – Confirmation Retreat, 11:00 Mass at Aquinas, First Ski Club

Sunday, Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> – Feast of St. Thomas Aquinas

Monday, Jan 29<sup>th</sup> – **Friday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> – SPIRIT WEEK! Calendar of events to be emailed on Monday**

Monday, Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Science Project Presentations – 7:00 P.M

Tuesday, Jan 30<sup>th</sup> – Chess Club

Saturday, Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> – PJAS at Duquesne University

Tuesday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> – MS Shakespeare Competition

Wednesday, Feb. 7<sup>th</sup> – AMC 10/12 Math Test for interested HS Math Students

Saturday, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup> – Admissions Open House

Monday, Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> – HS Shakespeare Competition

Tuesday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup> – Valentines/Mardi Gras Day at Aquinas

Wednesday, Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> – Ash Wednesday

Saturday, Feb. 17<sup>th</sup> – Father/Daughter Dance (Grades K – 8) (More info soon)

Saturday, Feb. 24<sup>th</sup> – Mother/Son Game Day (More info soon)

Monday, Feb. 26<sup>th</sup> – AAPA Evening Meeting followed by Parent Forum on technology/Social Media/safety

Saturday, Mar. 3<sup>rd</sup> – PARENT SOCIAL – CHILI FEST

Thursday, Mar. 15<sup>th</sup> – Speaker Series: Dr. Eugene Gan on Kids and Technology (flyer coming soon!)

Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> – HS Spring Dinner Dance at The Great Hall (Grades 8 – 12)

Monday, May 21<sup>st</sup> – WALKATHON

Get out your calendar and mark some of these fun and important dates!