



Wednesday Wrap-Up

March 10, 2010

Lots of good news and footnotes today!

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¹ Last Thursday, **senior Jake Schirra swam for Aquinas Academy in the WPIAL finals at Trees Pool at the University of Pittsburgh. Jake swam the 50 yard freestyle event and placed well, shaving more than 2 seconds off of his qualifying time.** It was very exciting to see Aquinas Academy on the Board for swimming! Jake competed in cooperation with Knoch High School, which allowed him to swim with their team under the Aquinas name. If there are swimmers who desire to find out more about how that came together, please contact either Jake or Mr. Richthammer. As a former swimmer and swim coach, Mr. Burchill was Jake's official "coach" at the WPIAL Finals! Congratulations to Jake for this "Aquinas First"!

² Juniors **Allura So and Yolanda Botti-Lodovico** competed in the Catholic Forensics League Regional Competition this past weekend, placing fourth in the duo competition. This **qualified them to compete in Nationals for the Catholic Forensics League, which will be held in Omaha, Nebraska in May.** Congratulations to Yolanda and Allura!

³ We also received word that **Marile Schraut qualified for States in the Prose Category for the PHSSL (Pennsylvania High School Speech League).** This State Forensics and Debate competition will be held at **Susquehanna University** in the spring!

⁴ Aquinas has been awarded two Honorable Mentions in the highly competitive Upper Division Scenes section of the **Shakespeare Monologue and Scene Competition**, and one in the Junior Division. **Honorable Mentions went to: Maria Ignelzi, Lizzie Phillips, Meg Boyd, and Chas Boyd for King Lear; and to James Heisler and Michael Blume for Julius Caesar.** Also, **Alaina Lisanti received an Honorable Mention for her monologue as the Jailer's Daughter in The Two Noble Kinsmen.** Aquinas also received compliments for its showing in the even more competitive Upper Division Monologues. Congratulations to all.

⁵ Following the Aquinas **Geography Bee** in January, the winner, Alaina Lisanti, took the qualifying written exam for the Pennsylvania Geo Bee later this spring. **We received word that Alaina placed as a finalist and will now participate at the state level at Penn State on April 9th.** Only once before was an Aquinas student a finalist at the very competitive state level – that was Mimi Rothfus several years ago. Congratulations to Alaina!!

⁶ Our **8th grade students will be having their Confirmation Retreat this Friday, March 12th.** **Students may dress UP on Friday**, in nice clothing different than their school uniform (... which is not to say that the school uniform is not nice!). Their Retreat will begin with 9:30 Mass at St. Catherine of Sweden. They will remain at St. Catherine for discussion and activity in the morning, as well as for lunch (which is being provided by parent volunteers). Following lunch, Fr. John Naugle, from St. Sebastian, will speak with students before they return to Aquinas Academy in time for an afternoon assembly (information in footnote below). Please keep our 8th grade students in your prayers on Friday, and as they receive the sacrament of Confirmation throughout the spring and into next fall.

⁷ The **2nd grade First Communion Retreat which was snowed out in February is rescheduled for Monday, April 12th** (upon return from Easter Break). Fr. Tony Gargotta will join students for a portion of that day to enrich their understanding of the gift of the Eucharist. It is always special to see our younger students start to receive Jesus in the Eucharist as parishes have their First Holy Communion Masses in the spring.

⁸ Just last week, the opportunity arose to bring a one-woman play, **Haunted by God: the Life of Dorothy Day, for a performance at Aquinas Academy.** Middle and High School students will see this theatrical production, true to the life of Dorothy Day, whose cause for canonization is open in the Catholic Church.

Dorothy Day (November 8, 1897 – November 29, 1980) was an American journalist, social activist, and devout Catholic convert. In the 1930s, Day worked closely with fellow activist Peter Maurin to establish the Catholic Worker movement, a nonviolent, pacifist movement that continues to combine direct aid for the poor and homeless with nonviolent direct action on their behalf.

This particular production is very faithful to her life story and her devotion to the Church after her conversion. Reviewed by David Scott for Our Sunday Visitor when the play opened in 1991, David echoes the praise of Lisa Wagner's portrayal of a strong woman of faith who embraced the poor and took action to provide assistance for those in need. More information can be found at the website, <http://www.stillpointtheatrecollective.org/haunted.html>

This performance will be at 1:00 in the cafeteria area, and is open to our families/friends. We believe that the witness of Dorothy Day's life will be

inspirational to our students, particularly during this season of Lent. All are invited.

⁹ **The National Latin Exam will be administered to Latin students in grades 7 through 12 this Thursday morning, March 11th, 2nd period.** Historically, many of our students receive high honors for this annual national exam. Please be sure that students are in school to take this exam which is administered only at this given time this week.

¹⁰ **The Final round of the Spelling Bee, for participation in the Diocesan Spelling Bee held in May, will be on Thursday morning, March 11th at 9:30,** following the National Latin Exam in the Rhodora. Parents of finalists from grades 4, 5, and 6 are welcome to attend. Please remain quietly outside the gym until all students have completed the National Latin Exam, which will be administered in the cafeteria.

¹¹ Please be sure to return **enrollment forms by the requested date of March 19th.** As we make staff decisions based on enrollment, **we are planning for two first grades of about 14 students each. If next year's second grade maintains its current size, we will strongly consider maintaining Mrs. Miller as a classroom assistant. Your prompt return of enrollment forms allows us to better make all of these very important decisions.** Please note also that **Kindergarten is almost at capacity.** Although that enrollment process is different because of the application process for new families, sibling enrollments and applications on hand indicate that it will be a full class. If you know of others who are planning to attend Aquinas Academy Kindergarten, but have not yet indicated that to us in any way, please inform them that timing is important in securing a space. At this time, space constraints, as well as long-term planning, will likely prevent the possibility of a second Kindergarten for another year or two. All of those decisions will be discussed at the upcoming March Board Meeting.

¹² Thank you to students for their generous donations for our **“Computer Dress Down Day”.** **With nearly \$500 collected that day, we believe we can match the \$800 challenge donation and secure 3 more computers** like the 12 that should shortly be arriving for the computer room. We look forward to upgrading the current technology, and planning for additional upgrades and redistribution of current hardware.

¹³ A reminder that next **Friday, March 19th, is a SCHOOL DAY. Originally a staff in-service day, it is being used as a make-up snow day, and is the last day of the third quarter. All bussing districts have been notified of our revised school year schedule!**

¹⁴ Parents should be sure to click the link for the **school calendar** on the Aquinas website and study the calendar for the remaining part of the school year. **Note that this is a working calendar, and is updated with relative frequency.** Of note to some, the **High School Spring Dance (to which 8th graders are invited) will be held on Friday, April 23rd,** at the Chadwick in Wexford. Originally, we had planned for April 30th... but with SATs on May 1st, that did not seem to be a wise decision! High School Parents should mark that date. More information will be coming soon!