

THE CROWN PRINTS

November 15, 2024 Volume 65; Issue 1

Aquinas Catholic
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Studying at Aquinas *Question of the Month*

By Brookelynn Banholzer

Welcome in! Aquinas High School welcomed in all the new students of Aquinas. The school is making sure that everyone had a safe environment and felt suitable for learning.

The school welcomed all the sixth graders and the few other new students to the school in the fall. Students came here from different schools to get better education, make new friends, and learn more about the Catholic faith. Sophomore Issac Saenz said the reason why he came here was "to get better education and have a better life because it's a Catholic school, and it's supposed to be stricter." Saenz came from Schuyler Central High School.

The staff of Aquinas do their best to get the students prepared for school. Teachers try to make the students comfortable with the environment and not nervous to come to the school. Seventh grader Emma

Scheele said, "The hardest part of transferring schools was seeing new people and seeing new faces." Scheele went to Saint Vincent Paul Catholic School in Seward, NE. Scheele transferred to Aquinas for her seventh-grade year.

Sports and activities are a big part of a student's life. Aquinas encourages the students to take part in extracurricular activities. Saenz said, "I am most looking forward to wrestling this school year; I wrestled for the past two years, but I'm scared because Aquinas has a lot of state championships here."

Aquinas makes sure the school has a good culture, so students can make good long lasting friendships. Scheele said, "Her favorite part of coming to Aquinas is being able to see her friends every day and making new memories."



Sophomores Isacc Saenz and Brayden Nuttelman pose in the cafeteria with Butler County Deputy Marla Schnell. Schnell visited the students during lunch as part of an outreach program sponsored by the local law enforcement. *Photo by J. Brown*

Month **How are you going to the top this school year?**

This year's theme was Verso Lalto which is Latin for, "to the top."

I am going to top this school year by getting the best grades possible.

-Ellie Piitz,
Freshman



I'd say that my goal this year is to keep my grades up, and to hopefully make it to state speech.

-Anna
Meysenburg,
Sophomore



By focusing on my grades and trying different things.

-Clarice Anandel,
Junior



By trying my hardest in all my activities and academics.

-Kaleb Anandel,
Junior



Growing a new curriculum

Aquinas introduces a new Ag program.

Aquinas Catholic School has launched a new agriculture education program, guided by an experienced teacher committed to helping students grow in agriculture knowledge and leadership. The program, which includes both classroom courses and a new FFA chapter, is designed to foster leadership skills, personal growth, and career success among students.

New agricultural teacher Ms. Shelby Kubicek, a former Nebraska State FFA Vice President, brings an extensive background in agriculture and education. Originally from Schuyler, NE and a graduate of Columbus Lakeview High School. Kubicek holds degrees in agriculture education from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a degree in secondary education from Arizona State University, and a degree in English from the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

After teaching English through Teach for America in Arizona and working with the 4-H program for five years, Kubicek felt “ready to return to my passion of agriculture” and was thrilled when Aquinas invited her to start its first agriculture program. “I felt God was leading my path to where my organizational strengths would be well-utilized.” Kubicek also noted the school’s proximity to her home in Seward

was another factor that made it feel like the right choice.

Since the program’s inception, Aquinas students have enrolled in various courses, including introduction to agriculture, ag business, ag construction and animal science. According to Kubicek, starting a new program has its challenges, with many people contributing ideas and goals, but the level of interest and commitment from students has been a welcome surprise.

In addition to the classroom learning, Aquinas’s new FFA chapter has drawn widespread interest, with 37 students signing up. Kubicek said, FFA is an “intra-curricular student organization” that brings together classroom learning, leadership development, and supervised agricultural experiences (SAE) through its three-circle model. According to Kubicek FFA programs are “an asset to the students and the community they reside in.”

The new FFA members attended their first event, Greenhand Leadership Day, where they explored various career and leadership development opportunities. The group also competed in its first contest, range judging, earning recognition despite having had only limited preparation time. “The students did amazing,” Kubicek said ,

noting that for many of them, “this was their first experience with anything like this.” Sophomore Sarah Coufal received a green ribbon for her performance, placing her in the top 40 of the junior division.

Aquinas has taken the unique approach of adopting the FFA affiliation model, meaning the school covers FFA membership dues for all agriculture students. “FFA is an extracurricular part of the curriculum,” Kubicek explained, “so it’s about giving students the full experience

with classroom learning, leadership development, and SAE.” The hope is to make the opportunity possible for all students to make the most of the program’s opportunities without any barriers.

As the program’s first year progresses, Kubicek is optimistic about the impact of the new agriculture curriculum and FFA chapter. With support from the community and a commitment to leadership and hands-on learning, the program is already providing students with the real-world skills and experiences they need to succeed in the agriculture industry. “We’re just getting started, and the possibilities really are endless,” she said.

CrownPrints

The Crown Prints is published four times a year to inform, educate, and entertain the Aquinas community.

We urge letters to the editor. Letters should be given to Ms. Jean A. Brown in Room 16. Letters must be signed; however, anonymity, if requested, will be granted if deemed necessary.

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The Crown Prints is a publication produced by the journalism department at Aquinas High School, David City, Nebraska 68632.



Senoir Brooklyn Stutzman says the Parliamentary Procedure. The ag business class learned this in early November. Photo by S. Piitz

Adjusting to new changes

By Clarice Anel

New year, new rules! The Aquinas Catholic school handbook added new changes for the 2024-25 school year.

The administration decided to go back to the old uniform policy from 2021. Students again had to wear polo shirts under their sweatshirts. Principal Mr. Spencer Zysset said, "The uniform policy is mainly to bring back collared shirts because they look better and make our students look sharper."

Another thing students adjusted to was a change from wearing any Aquinas crew-neck sweatshirts to only the ones designed for uniform. Zysset said, "Not that we had any problems with disunity, but by wearing a team sweatshirt makes students more fo-

cused on what they do than who they are. The goal is to make our students to be monarchs and feel more unified as one."

Many students had bought "spirit wear" sweaters just for uniform purposes. Senior student council president Kasen Lavicky said, "I think the rule is alright even, though I wish we could wear our Aquinas gear because it looks good."

Another change for the year 2024-25 dealt with cell phones. Students turned their phone into their computer cart in the morning in exchange for their laptop. If a student had online classes, he turned it into the library and picked it up at the end of the day. Junior Violet Schmid said, "I do

not mind it [the new policy] because I have never really used my phone; however, the only things I do worry about is if it was an emergency, and I do not have my phone."

Students also have the option to leave their phone in their car, if they do not want to turn it into the school. Zysset said, "The goal of this policy is to limit as many distractions as possible, so our students can keep focused on their classes to improve our academics." Lavicky added, "I think it is fine, but just a little inconvenient in case of an emergency."

Zysset, Lavicky, and Schmid all think that these rules are overall "great" additions to the overall improvement of our school.

Yindrick elevates spirituality

By Anna Schmid,

The new Campus minister Mrs. Melissa Yindrick takes us to the top in the 2024-2025 school year! Under Yindrick's guidance, students traveled further along in their spiritual journey.

Yindrick joined the Aquinas community as a staff member for the 2024-2025 school year. Yindrick said, "I have always been very close and involved with the school but have never thought to apply myself to work here until I saw a Campus Minister position available."

Yindrick said, "I quit asking God about

that several years ago but every once in a while, I would get an itch to do something more in the church. I decided to trust God and apply myself for the job." Yindrick said the more she prayed about it the more right it seemed.

Yindrick graduated from Aquinas and then went on to get a journalism degree. Yindrick's plan was to move to the East Coast and pursue a career in journalism. Yindrick later changed her mind, "No, I want to get married and have a family."

Yindrick has been involved with Aquinas for a very long time. Yindrick graduated from Aquinas in 1989, her kids Kaleb graduated in 2015, Will 2018, Jude 2021, Mara 2023, Gus will graduate in 2026, and Sam in 2030. Yindrick said, "I never would have thought I would end up back here but here we are!"

Yindrick said she wants to help Aquinas grow in its Catholic identity and wants to bring more joy and love into the building. "My goal is to be an instrument through which others come to know Jesus in a deeper way, so they can do the work that God has called them to do."



The homecoming kickoff night, organized by Mrs. Melissa Yindrick, started off with adoration. After adoration pizza was provided and those who attended shared fellowship to kick off a week of activities. Photos by R. Wacker

Working for a change

The Aquinas band worked to earn a one at the State Competition.

By Kade Semin

The band went marching on for another year of competition. Deacon Bob Viergutz's prepared the band for state.

Viergutz, after getting 0.8 of a point off from a I rating the year prior at state, helped the band receive a I rating that year. Since this was Viergutz's second year teaching the band, he knew what he needed to get done. "I now know how things work, and I kind of understand the timeline of things around here."

Viergutz chose senior saxophonist Bella Comte to be the drum major for the 2024-2025 season. "I'm trying my best to help everybody improve as a team. The band is doing really well, and we're a lot more prepared than we were last year and we're improving a lot," Comte said.

The new freshmen had to learn the principles of marching band this year. "I think that having the contest in Bennington was

kind of an eye opener for some of our freshmen," Viergutz said. "I feel like there's a lot more, like the difficulty level has increased and there's a lot more expectations," freshman trombonist Royce Fontenot added. Bennington was the first contest of the season, and the band received a II rating.

New items were introduced for the season, such as a brand-new baritone saxophone and other small pieces of equipment. Viergutz said there was a new attitude around the band. "I'm seeing that the culture of the band grow this year, and that is just really awesome."

Everyone seemed very pleased with the show, "The show came along very well," Comte said. On the other hand, Viergutz said, "I think anybody who goes into state marching band is just extremely confident and like 'yes, this is it,' are going to get this set themselves up for disappointment be-

cause state is very unpredictable."



The band marches down the highschool hall playing *September*. The practice march happened before the first competition at Bennington. Photo by J. Brown

Color guard returns

By Rebecca Wacker

And, flags, are up! Aquinas High School's marching band is once again complete with the addition of a color guard for this year's show, "Man of Steel," under the guidance of coaches, Mrs. Michaela Moravec and Mrs. Heather Oltmer.

According to Moravec, four flags took on the scheduling challenge to become part of the squad this year. "We practice two times a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7:00 AM."

After two years of having no color guard, learning a drill is a brand-new experience for all of the girls. Moravec said the girls are, "keeping the moves pretty basic, nothing too advanced."

Senior guard member Keltie Hein felt learning drill went well. Hein said they have mostly been working on their routine and are starting to practice getting to the right spots.

According to Hein, Moravec mentioned renewing the color guard to the cheerleading squad last year. Hein was further convinced to join when she found out Oltmer was helping coach. Oltmer is Hein's aunt.

Hein enjoys being a part of the color guard. "So, [color guard is] definitely a new thing, and it's an interesting experience. So far, it's been fun," Hein said.

Junior guard member Miranda Novacek explained the color guard started practice during band camp. "[The coaches] showed us a bunch of cool tricks, and then we started learning the routine."

Novacek said color guard practiced inside on Tuesday and be on the field Thurs-

day at the beginning. According to Novacek, the color guard was going outside with the marching band full time, in addition to, "memorizing the routine individually."

"I thought I was going to struggle with it because [color guard] are usually right-handed. I am left-handed, but with a lot of practice it turned out easier than I thought," Novacek said.

"I love flags. I think it's one of the best things that has been added," Novacek said.



Senior Keltie Hein and junior Miranda Novacek perform their flag routine during the state marching band competition at Seacrest Field. Hein, Novacek, and seniors Avery Oltmer and Tylee Truksa completed the color guard. Photos courtesy of J. Prochaska

Fourth in fifteen years

The Aquinas softball team achieves goal and defeats the Cavaliers.

By Rebecca Wacker

Second time's the charm! In a thrilling rematch, the Aquinas softball team defeated the Neumann Cavaliers 9-5, marking a significant achievement in the team's history. Head coach Mr. Paul Gahan said, "We've only beaten Neumann like four times in the school's history. That's fifteen years and you're talking at least twice a year so at least thirty games, probably more."

Gahan feels the girls had a lot of energy, both on the field and in the dugout. The team played with both good defense and offense in the game. "[Neumann] was a great win."

According to Gahan, the win did not have the anticipated impact on the team. "Things kind of took a turn for the worse after that game."

"We kept working hard, having fun, and the team came together in these last couple weeks," Gahan said.

Senior first baseman Elizabeth Roh feels since the team had already played Neumann once this season, all the nerves were alleviated. "When we played them the second time, we were just ready," Roh said.

Roh believes the team had a lot of energy and was having a good time. "I think we were just having a lot of fun in the game; we cheered really loudly and were relaxed while playing."

Roh felt the win was needed to give the team more confidence. "I think it's helping us right now, even if we're not doing so well,

to see that we do have the potential to be a really good team."

Sophomore catcher Brookelynn Banholzer said senior pitcher Brooklyn Stutzman pitched well during the game. "[Stutzman's] spin on the ball was working really well, and she had the endurance to strike girls out and hit her spots."

Banholzer also felt the team was batting well, saying, "One person hit and then it just kind of sparked the rest of the team."

Banholzer said the team was emotional when celebrating after the game. "This was the first time we really wanted a win."



Senior pitcher number seven Brooklyn Stutzman throw a strike. Stutzman had a successful high school career in pitching and holds several school records. *Photo by S. Piitz*

Senior center fielder number eight Kar-men Karpisek waits for a pitch. *Photo by S. Piitz*

Monarchs moving up

Seniors coach the sixth graders through their last year of flag football.

By Kailer Pohl

Sixth graders ended their last season of flag football. Senior coaches Marcus Krivanek, Kailer Pohl, and Kelby Coufal guided the young athletes through the season.

The seniors came together as coaches at the request of adults involved in the program. Krivanek's father asked him to coach the sixth graders, and he needed some help, "Marcus then asked me one day if I would help at practice, and then we started going to the games and went from there," Coufal

said.

Coufal and Krivanek faced some challenges as coaches. Krivanek and Coufal said, "The young players do not listen often, but when they do, they listen well. That is the only struggle is getting them to pay attention." However, the three high school coaches felt as the season went on the team improved.

The coaches learned and had fun with the team. "We were just hanging out with each other and having fun on the football

field with the six graders," Krivanek said. Coufal agreed and felt the season was an amazing experience, and they were glad to be given this opportunity.

According to Coufal and Krivanek sixth graders ended their year strong. "We ended the season going 6-0 it was a good experience, and the kids liked us as coaches," Coufal said. Sixth graders won every game by two touchdowns or more.

Ukraine's uncertain future now

By Evan Hoelscher

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a massive invasion into Ukraine. Russia used the fear of increased Western influence to explain their invasion, as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) had been discussing adding Ukraine to the alliance. At first, Ukraine experienced massive Western support throughout the war, but many, including this editor, are beginning to fear the support may dwindle.

In June of 2021 at the NATO Brussels summit, NATO leaders reaffirmed an earlier statement made by the NATO leaders of the Bucharest summit in 2008 that Ukraine would be joining NATO in the near future. On NATO's Bucharest Summit Declaration, NATO's leaders said the following, "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO."

According to Elliot Davis Junior, author of Why Did Russia Invade Ukraine? "A principal demand of Russia is to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO." If Ukraine were to join the NATO alliance, Russia would be nearly entirely surrounded by NATO allied countries on its Western border, a position that makes Russia nervous.

Since their invasion of Ukraine, Russia has been sanctioned by the United States, Canada, and most of Europe. However, these sanctions have, as of today, proven ineffective. Many NATO members, including the United States, still buy oil from Russia. Russian trade with China has hit an all-time high and many Russian companies have begun producing valuable military equipment.

These factors have allowed the Russian economy to grow during the war. According to Steven Rosenberg, author of Russia's economy is growing, but can it last? "The International Monetary Fund predicts that Russia will record economic growth of 3.2% this year."

Ukraine has received massive support from Western countries, with the U.S. providing \$55.7 billion in support to Ukraine. The U.S. has also provided aircraft, missiles, guns, ammunition, vehicles, and other miscellaneous items. The U.S. Department of State provides an extensive list of what America has given to Ukraine in the article U.S. Security Cooperation with Ukraine.

The European Union has made over \$126 billion in contributions to Ukraine. Ukraine is dependent on Western support to keep fighting, and even with that support, Ukraine is losing ground to Russia. According to Sorcha Bradley, author of Who is Winning the War in Ukraine, "Russian forces have steadily gained 750 square miles of territory since October 2023."

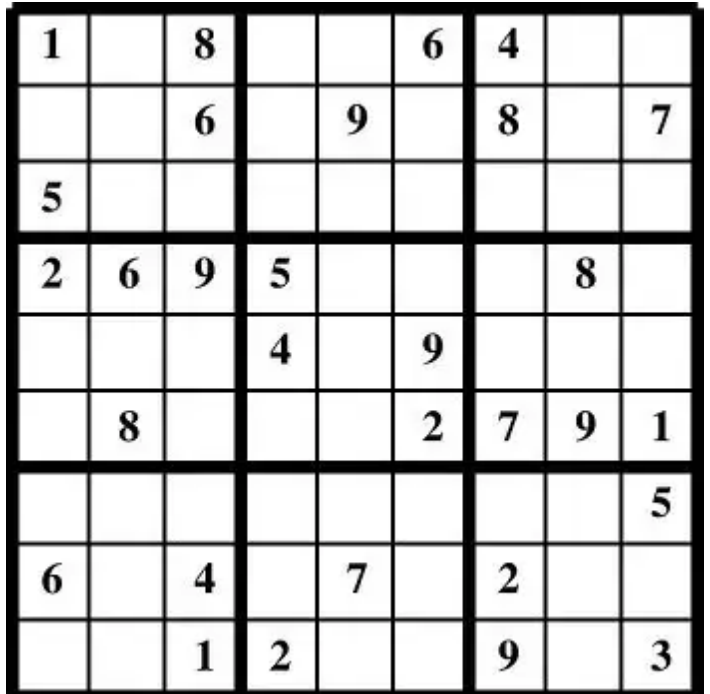
President Trump's plan to deal with the Ukraine War is unclear to many. Trump has claimed to be able to end the war in one day, a claim Russia's United Nations ambassador strongly disagreed with. Trump has refused to expand on these claims previously, saying "You know, part of it's surprise, right?"

Trump's main idea to end the war seems to be forging a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine.

Trump has said little of this too, but some politicians are guessing Trump may pressure Ukraine to cede land to Russia to incentivize the

truce.

In the opinion of this editor, America must keep supporting Ukraine. It is America's responsibility as a superpower to protect countries that cannot protect themselves, such as Ukraine, from attack. The reader is urged to both donate privately to Ukrainian charities, such as the International Rescue Committee and to voice their desires to the president for more support to Ukraine.



By Rose Wessling