

Confused about the state of our roof? Check out page 3



the Echo

Read about Easter traditions explained on page 4



Illiana Christian High School

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Lansing, Illinois

Juniors take on Springfield, Indianapolis for Close Up

Beth Boonstra
Reporter

March 2 and 3, eight specially selected Illiana juniors visited the state capitals in both Illinois and Indiana. Accompanied by Mr. Jeff White, they explored the history of these cities and observed the state houses in session.

Junior Cora Walsh said, "It was very interesting comparing the two states' governments."

Junior Sydney Shaffer said, "[The State Assembly] seemed a lot more organized [in Indiana]. In Illinois people were talking and walking around doing their own thing during session. A lot of people were arguing, but they were kind of talking out their differences."

In addition to visiting the state houses, students went to Lincoln's tomb and house, the Lincoln museum, the Tippecanoe battlefield, and much more.

"We packed a ton in," White said. "We got to school at 5 a.m. and didn't get to the hotel until 10 p.m."

Students had the opportunity to talk to and question Illinois Representative Laura Fine and Indiana Representative Hal Slager about their jobs.

This trip was resurrected from twelve years prior. Though it shares the same title, it isn't affiliated with the Close Up Foundation. Illiana's history department organized the trip on its own.

Shaffer said, "I've never been to Springfield or Indianapolis.... [I liked the trip because] we got to see what we had learned in class. It was like US Constitution in action."



Photo by Joanna Barrera

The Funky Monkeys accept a \$200 check for having the best airband performance while laughing and striking a pose after the Show on March 18.

'The Show' a showstopper

Lauren Curtis
Reporter

On Friday, March 18, five air bands performed at The Show in order to raise money for Shelly Hernandez and her family.

Shelly is suffering from multiple myeloma which is the second most common blood cancer in the world.

This cancer may cause tumors, damages the kidneys, and impairs immune system function.

She is now getting treatment at the University of Chicago for this

incurable disease.

Go Club dedicated the show this year to her so that their family would have enough money for their daily needs.

Illiana raised about 1,057. 90 for the Hernandez family.

"I felt very honored when I was told it had been decided to dedicate The Show to our family. It was yet another sign that God is our Provider and continues to take care of us," said Hernandez.

Five different air band groups performed songs from Veggie Tales to Justin Bieber.

"I just wanted to help out the Hernandez family plus I knew me and my friends would have fun," said Sophomore Malik Evans

The winners of this year's show was Funky Monkeys. They performed Zach's Song from School of Rock.

"My favorite part was the crowd going crazy and just rocking out with my friends," said Senior Colin DeYoung.

"I felt like I was born to rock, and air guitar just comes so naturally to me I thought it would be a good idea....," said Senior Nick

Wondaal.

Near the end of The Show Shelley Hernandez was treated to a performance from her daughter Sarah. Sarah dedicated a praise dance in honor of her mother to the song My Story by DaddyWeave.

"I was very proud to watch my daughter do the praise dance, said Hernandez. "It actually brought tears to my eyes. God has given her the talent to praise dance and it makes me very proud when she uses that talent for His glory." "The night was just wonderful."



'Cinderella' a sold-out success

On March 10, 11, and 12, Illiana's Drama Department put on Roger and Hammerstein's Cinderella. Up, the evil step family bosses around Cinderella. Right, Prince Christopher commands the Royal Steward to try on Cinderella's glass slipper on every eligible maiden in the kingdom. Full coverage of the spring musical on page 5



Rage against the cage

That chicken you ate last night, odds are it never saw the light of day, and it probably had broken legs due to the rapid rate of growth induced by hormones. And the egg you ate for breakfast probably came from a chicken that couldn't even stretch out its wings. The poultry and egg industry brutalizes the chickens.



Collette Bouwer
News Editor

All-creatures.org tells the story of the egg producers. On industrial farms, workers throw out all the male chicks, as one would throw out a napkin, leaving them to die in large garbage bins. They

only value the females because they only want eggs. Once only females remain, workers cut off the tips of their beaks with a hot blade. The beaks have to be removed, because they are trapped in battery cages the rest of their lives. The cages are the size of a folded newspaper and are shared among a few chickens, so they remove the beaks to prevent the chickens from injuring each other. They live in these cages for up to 2 years.

Besides the egg industry, there is also the poultry industry which is fairly similar. As the film "Food Inc." shows, the poultry industry also throws out the males and burns off the beaks. However, instead of battery cages the birds are imprisoned in huge barns, crammed full with chickens. Some have windows, but many don't; many chickens literally never see the light of day.

On top of the close quarters, the industry injects these chickens with so many hormones that they grow too fast for their legs to support them. They can only take a few steps before falling, and many of their legs snap beneath their weight, causing them to live the rest of their lives with broken limbs.

At night, workers will come in to snatch the 8 week old chickens, throwing them into trucks to be sent off to be butchered. Normally chickens will live a couple years, but since they have been given so many hormones, the industry can produce fully matured animals in 1/13 of their normal life span.

No living thing should be treated that way. Such industrial practices are nothing short of torture. God may have given us dominion over the Earth, but we bear that power as stewards of His creation who are to treat our fellow creatures with dignity. That doesn't mean we must all go vegan. But it does suggest we honor those animals that become our food with better treatment than our modern, industrial farms provide.

As consumers, we can make a difference. When you buy chicken, look for free range chicken which has been allowed a life outside of a barn. When you buy eggs, buy from a local farmer or look for eggs labelled "cage-free." Our practices as consumers can have a profound influence in how our society's farms work.

USA today reported in an article two years ago that Perdue Chicken stopped using human antibiotics on 95% of their chickens. This change came about because of the strong push for antibiotic-free food. The article quotes CEO Jim Perdue said, "It's a big deal. We listen to consumers."

However, in order for them to listen, we need to speak up. So, speak up.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Senior Trevor Scheffers applies pressure to his arm to stop the bleeding after giving a pint of blood.

Saving lives, one pint at a time

Mikerra Hall
Reporter

On March 22, Student Council held its second biannual blood drive in the cafeteria.

Junior Jake Olthoff decided to give blood. He said he decided to give blood partly to get out of class but also

to help others. Olthoff said, "It went well even though I blacked out. I feel fine now and I would donate again."

"Donating blood is important because doing so helps others who need it and don't have access to it," said Christina Marquez, a Heartland Blood Center worker who said she thinks the Illiana Blood Drive is absolutely

amazing. Marquez applauded students' courage to give blood in order to help save others' lives.

Marquez added, "I have been doing this job for six years. I do this because it's a way of helping people. It is a great feeling knowing we're saving lives."

Mr. Neil Zandstra, a guidance counselor at Illiana and

a Student Council sponsor, helped organize the Blood Drive. Zandstra said, "The Illiana Blood Drive is a way for Illiana students and the community to donate blood and give back to the surrounding communities." Blood transfusions are needed every day.

Between 50 to 70 pints of blood are usually donated by Illiana students.

Seniors' trip to Shakespeare 'successful'

Dalton Haven
Reporter

Sixty-two seniors accompanied by English teachers Mr. DeVries, Ms. Johnson, and Ms. VanStee left school to see William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night." "Twelfth Night" is a story about twins who were separated in a shipwreck and one of the twins who is named Viola makes it to a place where she falls in love with a Duke but he is in love with a Countess. Viola, for her own protection, disguises herself as a man who it turns out the Countess has a crush on as well.

The English Depart-

ment has brought students on that trip for nearly fifteen years. VanStee explained the motivation: "It is necessary to take students to see Shakespeare performed live so that they can get a better understanding of Shakespeare."

Eros Perez said, "It was really funny and the actors played their roles especially well since most of them were musicians." He added that if he had the chance to go again, he definitely would.

Brent Verhagen thought it was fantastic and had a lot of emotion throughout which made the play very well done.

Cole Bonnema

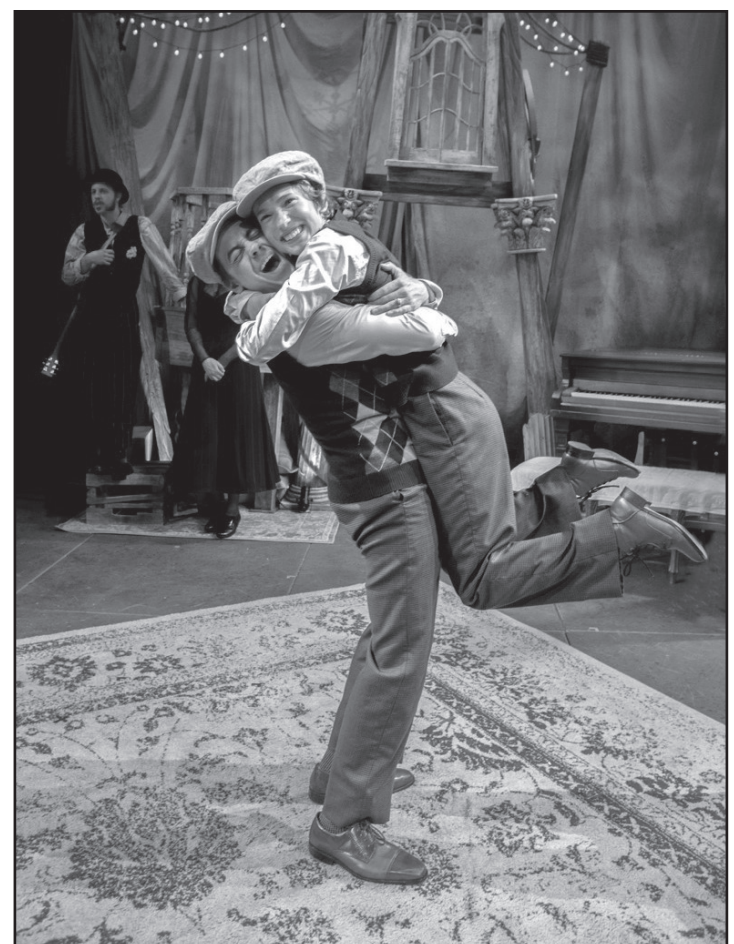


Photo courtesy of chicagonow.com

Sebastian and Viola celebrate their discovery of each other in the climax of Chicago Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night."

thought the play was put together well, especially the actors and sets. At one point he "laughed so hard [he] almost cried."

"The trip was successful," DeVries said,

"because it allowed students to realize that Shakespeare is not at all inaccessible. His concerns are ours, and his plays still speak to us today."



Chicago Symphony Orchestra performs downtown at the Symphony Center.

Photo courtesy of `directory-assets.s3.amazonaws.com`

Chicago Symphony Orchestra impresses Wind Ensemble

Cassie Iaconelli
Reporter

On Friday, March 17, Mrs. Menninga took Wind Ensemble to the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (CSO) to watch them perform and practice. Students watched them perform for about 2 hours. Then, they took a walk around Chicago, and some people went to eat lunch and

get shakes. “When we went to watch CSO,” Jeff Kroll, sophomore, started to explain, “We watched one of their rehearsals. It was a student day so there were other schools there with us. We all watched them practice.” “I learned that CSO has been around since the early 1900’s,” explained sophomore Matt Rietveld. “It is incredible that the Orchestra has been in existence for a

long time and is still going strong.” Senior Katherine Boerman-Cornell said, “It was really nice to experience the music in such a fancy, downtown setting with great acoustics. It was great to listen to music that was such good quality... I loved the second piece which was the Beethoven piano concerto because the soloist moved his fingers so fast they were literally a blur.”

“It was very professional,” said senior Cole Bonnama. “It’s the type of band you’re not going to hear cheaply, so it’s really great to go there and not have to pay a lot of money to see it.” After a long day in Chicago, they all boarded the bus to go back home. “I would love to do it all again,” Kroll said. Even though he went last year, he said it was still a very fun experience.

Students learn innovation at Art Festival

Faith Mischka
Reporter

On Tuesday, March 8, six students and art teacher Mr. Kamphuis took part in the Metro Art Festival at Timothy Christian High School. The students, all seniors, were Sarah Parrish, Noah Venhuizen, Paige Osika, Connor Moss, Brooke VanDerAa, and Parker Roeda. At the festival, students attended workshops to learn new techniques. Illiana

Christian’s students Brooke VanDerAa and Paige Osika participated in the oil painting workshop. Senior Parker Roeda, who took part in a figure drawing workshop, said, “My favorite part was looking around at all the art pieces kids entered. [In my workshop] I saw God through this from the beginning when our teacher told us we have to really look at someone and the movement of their bodies in order to see their differences because nobody on earth looks the same.” Senior Brooke VanDerAa said, “It was also very cool to see all of the different art pieces presented and the wide variety of media.”



Seniors pose around VanDerAa’s painting inspired by a snapchat selfie. She used acrylic paint, oil paints and asphalt to create this piece.

Photo by Jim Kamphuis

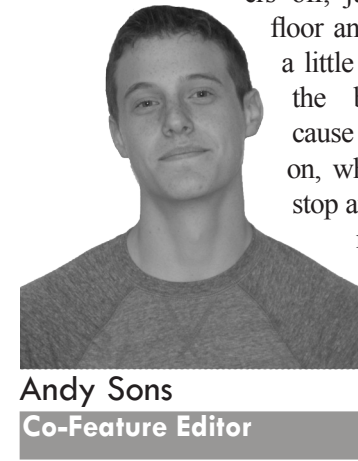
Leaky roof potentially drains dollars

Riley Goodwin
Reporter

This past winter break Illiana Christian High School’s roof experienced a few major leaks due to the weight of ice and snow sitting on the roof, especially in the east wing of the school. The east wing of the school has had leakage issues over the past few years, but this season has been a little worse than the rest. “There is not a lot I can do about it at the moment until we can do some major repair works,” said AJ Turkstra. “We’ve done some bandaging here and there and it’s done a good job, but we still have some problems.” The roof in the east wing was put on in 1996 and you can’t expect to get much more out of a roof than 20 years said Turkstra. Repairs in total so far in the east wing alone have been about \$6,000-\$7,000. “To replace the entire roof over that area would be well over \$100,000,” said Turkstra. The school continues to debate whether or not they want to spend that much money on this facility. Sophomore Rebecca Werblo said, “Having all the buckets in the halls and in classrooms has been pretty inconvenient, but it’ll be summer soon so it’s okay.”

Where’s the egg-citement?

Waking up Easter morning, the joy and the eagerness fills my 6 year old self. The smell of broccoli casserole from downstairs teases my nostrils. I flip the covers off, jump to the floor and take off like a little booger. I pass the bathroom because I mean come on, who has time to stop and take a bathroom break (or brush your teeth for that matter) when there are Easter eggs to be found. As I get downstairs, the smell becomes even more overwhelming, ham, turkey and rolls.



Andy Sons
Co-Feature Editor

Finally once downstairs, I start to see eggs hidden around the room and let me tell you, I GO CRAZY! I want those eggs more than anything, with the candy inside and the satisfaction that comes when you find an egg under that pillow, even though there’s been an egg under that same pillow for 7 years straight. The thrill never runs out, I’m telling you.

After finding the eggs, then would come the most important item hidden in the house. MY EASTER BASKET!! It was always in a huge zip lock bag with candy galore and even a couple of gifts. Now each bag had the name of the recipient written on it. I would run throughout the house looking under tables and in showers, and along the way I would always find my brothers’ and sisters’ bags, but never mine. Later on in life I found out my brother would keep moving my bag until my mother would tell him to knock it off so I could finally find it.

The rest of the day would be filled with family and friends coming over to eat astonishing food. (Seriously guys, my mom’s cooking is absolutely amazing) Naps and games would follow and don’t get me started on the amount of dishes to clean up.

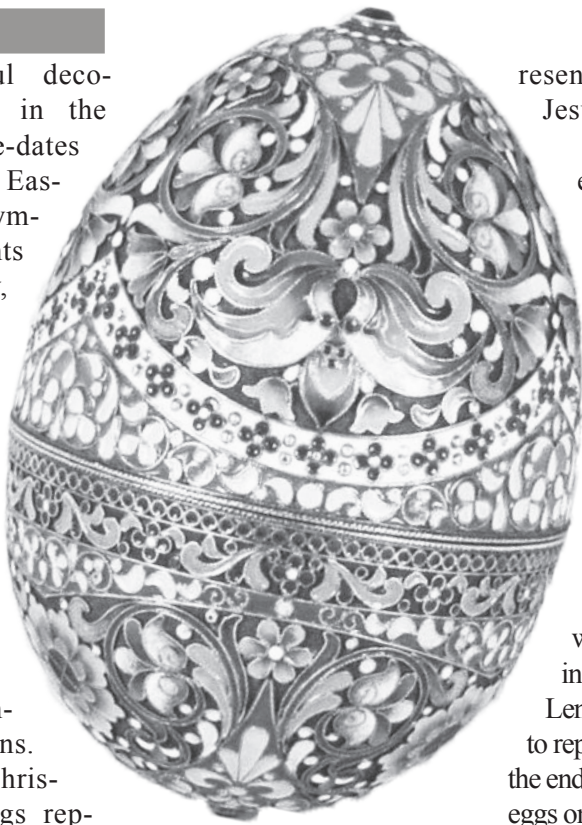
So yet again you may be asking yourself, why I’m reading just another Andy Sons’ life story (autographs will be given upon request). Well, I’m not going to give you the generic ‘Jesus is the reason for the season’ (that might be for Christmas but it works here too). What I am going to give you is this: I am willing to bet that many of you had somewhat the same traditions as me, whether it was finding eggs or your Easter basket, and you had the same excitement in you, but what if I asked you the question: “Do you still have that same excitement Easter morning?” I also am willing to bet that’s a big fat no. I mean, come on, looking for Easter eggs in the exact same spots they’ve been in for the past 17 years, not really a thrill of a lifetime, is it? But I challenge each and every one of you to regain that exhilaration for a different reason. Wake up Easter morning eagerly because you know your Lord and Savior has died for you and risen. God defeated death on this day and showed us the greatest amount of love any of us could ever receive. So this Easter, wake up with that same joy you had when you were 8 years old ready to find eggs, but instead be joyful because Jesus Christ rose from the grave, and man, that’s better than any Easter basket I’ve ever gotten. Sorry, Mom.

Easter: Separating Christian from pagan elements

Origins of Easter eggs

Elyse Dunham
Co-Feature Editor

The colorful decorating of eggs in the springtime pre-dates the holiday of Easter. The egg is symbolic. It represents new life, fertility, and rebirth. The decorating of eggs occurred during the Iranian New Year which falls on the spring equinox. Also, decorated ostrich eggs have been found in the tombs of ancient Egyptians. But today, for Christians, Easter eggs represent the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Orthodox and Eastern Catholic churches have taken the painting of Easter eggs as their own tradition. The eggs are painted red, blessed by the priest, and passed out to the congregation. The shell of the egg, representing the tomb, is cracked, representing the resurrection. Also, some Christians who abstain from eating eggs and meat during Lent, would decorate eggs to represent the celebration at the end of Lent and then eat the eggs on Easter.

Origins of Easter bunny

Elyse Dunham
Co-Feature Editor

Like Easter eggs, the Easter bunny isn’t connected to Easter biblically. No one knows the exact origin of this mythical mammal, but in the 1700s German immigrants, settling in Pennsylvania,

brought the tradition of the Easter bunny over to America. The immigrants’ children would make nests in which the egg-laying hare could put its eggs. This tradition carried on throughout the U.S.; the Easter bunny expanded its gifts to chocolate and various other types of candies.

In even earlier times people from northern Europe celebrated a goddess named Eastre and they held a festival named after her during the spring equinox. The goddess Eastre’s earthly symbol was the rabbit. Because rabbits

usually have large litters during the spring, it represents fertility and new life.

Across the globe there are different stories of the Easter Bunny. Peter Cottontail is the magical creature that almost every child in America fantasizes about. He hops into their house and puts tasteful presents into their Easter baskets. Australia had an excessive number of rabbits which resulted in the annoyance of these creatures. So Australia, to avoid the Easter bunny, created the Easter bilby, an endangered animal there.



What do you think of the term Easter?

“Scripture doesn’t use the term Easter, it uses the First Fruits which is a Jewish holiday that comes three days after Passover. If we view Jesus in light of the Passover and the Festival of First Fruits, I think we would understand it in a much more biblically oriented way. I think Easter should be called the Festival of First Fruits.”

-Mr. Mark Dykstra, Bible Teacher



“When I think of Easter I don’t think of where [the term] came from, I think of what it is. If I ran the world, I would call it Resurrection Day.”

-Mr. Lance Davids, Director of Spiritual Development

Fairy tales do come true

‘Cinderella’ plays to sold-out audiences three straight performances

JP Peerbolte
Reporter

Illiana’s musical this spring, “Cinderella,” was a sell-out success. This year’s production was very similar to the classic Cinderella story that many people love.

Thursday the musical had a very large crowd. The Friday night production sold out as well as the matinee at 2 on Saturday and the showing at 7. Roughly 1,800 people

watched Cinderella over the 3 day period. This was a great selling year according to Mrs. Lagerwey and the sales back it up. Illiana’s Cinderella grossed \$11,840 for the 4 performances.

Senior Lorna DeWindt, who played Cinderella said, “I think it went really, really, really well.”

Mrs. Lagerwey said that everyone in the production was very professional. They were able to cope with prob-

lems that were out of their control, including handling an unplanned scene change with great expertise during the Saturday matinee.

Many young girls showed their enthusiasm for Cinderella by dressing up when they saw the musical. After the performances DeWindt shared her crown with the young girls who were ecstatic to spend time in the carriage with her.

“She was a lovely example [of being professional],” said Mrs. Lagerwey.

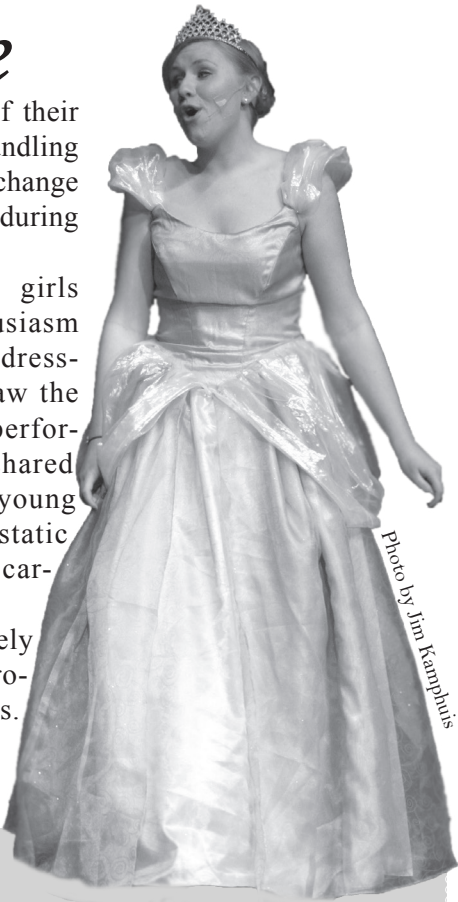


Photo by Jim Kamphuis

ASK VICKY VIKING

Learning to love starts with self

Dear Vicky Viking,
Lately I just feel so worthless. I wasn’t Cinderella in the musical and I’m not in the starting line up of a spring sport. I’m not the valedictorian of my class and I don’t come to school every day looking like a model. I’m so average in everything. Everyone else has something they are good at. I just don’t see how anyone could want to be friends with me because there are so many girls better than me. I’m not known for anything, I’m just there. I would love to have a boyfriend but I’m just not good enough for them to look at me like that. Obviously anyone would pick the other girls who are near perfect. I wish I could be a different person than who I am because I am nothing special.

Sincerely,
Feeling Invisible

Dear Feeling Invisible,
First of all, you need to stop and take a deep breath. All of these thoughts are getting more and more destructive as you keep dwelling on them. The more you overthink, the worse everything gets.

Now, step back and ask yourself: “Are these thoughts beneficial to me?” In this case, no, they are far from beneficial. Thinking this way can only make things more difficult for you. Instead of dwelling on all of the things that are unpleasant in your life, what you need to do is instead of dwelling on all of the things that are unpleasant in your life focus on the positive aspects.

For example, what is one thing that made you smile today? Or something you enjoy doing? Diverting your attention away from the poisonous thoughts of comparison will help to clear the self-doubt from your mind.

Count your blessings. This sounds very cliché, but it is extremely helpful. God has blessed you with so many gifts, whether it be socially, spiritually, physically or mentally and you need to be able to embrace those things. Use the stuff God has equipped you with to conquer all of that discouragement and doubt.

Let me tell you, you are not the only one going through this. That girl you think is so much better than you? She is going home every day wishing she was different, too. Everyone has insecurities and everyone feels unvaluable at some point in life.

One of the best things to do in this situation is talk to someone. Grab a friend and tell them these feelings. They might just be feeling the same way. You could go to any of the teachers or counselors here at Illiana, too. They’re all here to encourage you to be the best you can be, and I bet they see so much more in you than you even realize.

If none of these are good options for you right now, talk to God. He’s always there to listen to you and offer comfort when you need it. In fact, it hurts Him to see you in such despair because he created you just the way you are, with each and every flaw or talent. Just tell Him how you’re feeling. He will always be there to listen.

I hope this helped and that you realize how truly irreplaceable you are.

Sincerely, Vicky Viking

Do you need advice? Contact Vicky at vickyvikingilliana@gmail.com or write a letter and turn it in to Mr. DeVries’s mailbox located in the office. Thank you!

Seniors Take Their Final Bow

“Being part of the musical was awesome! Costumes was definitely my favorite part. We get to have fun and build great friendship with each other and the cast.” - Joanna Barrera



“I will miss all the people that I have worked with here and all of the shenanigans that we would do. During the plays and musicals everyone puts their differences behind them and become like a family” -Nathan Dykstra



“Being in the musical is like being a part of a big family...I loved getting to take pictures with the little kids that came and seeing the little girls in their adorable princess dresses and their beaming faces when I asked them if they wanted to wear my tiara.” -Lorna DeWindt



“I love acting and also community among the cast...I struggled with fake smiling. It was pretty hit-or-miss.” -Aaron Knapper



Photo by Randy Peterson

The Magic

Altogether, 15 explosions rocked the stage at rehearsals and performances of the musical. Don’t worry, they were planned. Illiana had never used high tech pyrotechnics before, but sets designer Jim Kamphuis, decided to try it for “Cinderella.” The two Fairy Godmothers, Carly

DeVries and Emmajean Spoelman, popped around the stage using the flashes and smoke from the explosions as a disguise. Despite a few doubts and fears concerning the on-stage ignition, it went smashingly, with only one late ignition. Even so, the cast was always told to wait until the explosion happened to move, and there was always a fire extinguisher on standby.



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

The Carriage

Cinderella’s glittery carriage was a stunning set piece, strung with battery-operated lights. Jim Kamphuis designed the carriage and the diligent sets construction crew executed his plans. The crew cut, measured, painted and maneuvered the piece for rehearsals. Recycling old wood from the mud room, they made the ramp and carriage to add magic to the

performance. Four white “horses” pulled the carriage through the crowd. One of those horses who also worked on the construction crew, Ming Van Kalker, said that it was very heavy and a bit difficult to maneuver through cramped quarters. Overall, the luminous carriage brought magic to the performance. After the matinee, the carriage also became a photo opportunity for dozens of children who climbed in beside Cinderella.



Photo by Randy Peterson

Photo by Jim Kamphuis

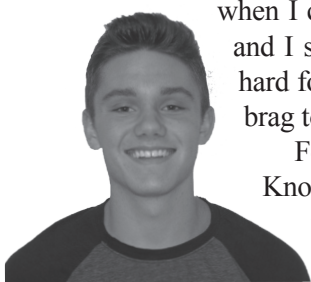
The Dress

Cinderella’s wish came true when her ragged maid’s outfit turned to a dazzling blue gown just in time for the ball. The quick transformation was due to seamstress Richelle VanderZee, owner of Making entirely different dress without its wearer taking it off. With the help of

Director Mary Lagerway, VanderZee researched and studied the best ways to make such a gown. After four days of hard work, VanderZee had created a stunning costume. In reference to the show, she said she thought “all the students and faculty that were involved did a wonderful job” and “thoroughly enjoyed watching the presentation!”

It's NOT all about YOU

Hi, my name is Jacob and I am a recovering cocky jerk. I struggle with humility, especially in sports. It's one of the hardest things to point back to God when I want it to be all about me. Growing up I wanted to be the best at everything (though I surely wasn't). To this day when I cross the finish line and I see my time, it's so hard for me not to go and brag to others.



Jacob Thompson
Co-Sports Editor

For instance Juliana Knot told me this story from freshman year the first time she met me and to this day I laugh at how ignorant I was. Every year for cross we go to "cross camp" which is a week where we go and run and bond as a team. We were up in Michigan and we were taking the day to go and run the Macinaw Island loop then go visit some shops. Juliana tells me she can clearly remember me buying a thing of hot sauce for somewhere around \$15 and bragging that I could drink the whole thing and would denounce anyone who said otherwise. What a stupid thing to brag about, but apparently I couldn't stop myself

It's so hard not to be all about you when our world tells you its ok to be that way. "Do what makes YOU happy man," or "IM the best and I deserve that spot on the team more than her/him." It's so hard to draw that line and point the glory back to God.

But I believe God calls us to be humble. Look at the story of Moses. Moses was a prince, and basically got what he wanted. He was one of the most educated men in all of Egypt and had the finest things the world had to offer. But before God could use Moses, he had to send him into the wilderness to have him do the job of a little girl- shepherding. God wasn't going to use Moses until his ego had been brought way down. God uses the humble and the meek to do his works.

So although I may not be the most humble person in the entire world (I'm humble enough to admit that), God is doing works in my life to make me a man of humility.



Junior Bo Hofstra delivers to home plate in an early game this season.

Photo courtesy of Hanna VanderWoude

Varsity baseball stays loose despite weight of high expectations

Juliana Knot

Co-Editor in Chief

Varsity baseball has started off its season with a 1-1 record and high expectations.

Last year the team won sectionals in 3A but has since been moved down to 2A. Head coach Dan Gibson says the team has a good chance of making it to the final four in state. According to him,

this is his last year coaching.

The team's promise rests upon a combination of talent and good team chemistry. "It really helps that we're really deep in pitching this year," said third basemen Colin Lautenbach. "Not only do we have a lot of pitchers, but they're also really strong."

The team's starting nine are also all returning varsity players. Ac-

cording to pitcher and right fielder Jack Hillegonds, "We've played together for four years. Some of us have been playing together since t-ball."

Because of the team's potential, players said that the tone of practices have changed. Pitcher and infielder Kyle Schaaf said, "Coach said he expected more of us because of the talent on the team."

Pitcher Bo Hofstra added, "We're still lighthearted,

but now the pressure is on."

Now the team is preparing for its spring break Florida tournament. Gibson said that the competition is tough because they have had better weather and therefore more playing time. "Other teams will have played 15 to 20 games to our three to five," said Gibson. "It's still a great trip that gives the guys a chance to practice and bond."

Boys track strong out of the blocks

Luke Hillegonds

Co-Sports Editor

The boy's track team participated in 3 qualifiers for state on February 27, March 5, and March 19.

The first meet was on Feb-

ruary 27 and was held at Hillsdale University. Nick Wondaal took first place in the mile which qualified him for state and Colin DeYoung took second which also qualified him for state. Derek VanProyen also qualified for state in the 2 mile event.

On Saturday March 5 at Olivet University, the boy's track team participated in the second qualifier for state.

At this qualifier, the 4x8 relay team consisting of Nick Wondaal, Colin DeYoung, Derek VanProyen, and Austin Ohm, qualified for the state meet. The

4x8 relay team took first.

At the final qualifier on March 19 at Glenbard South the boys participated but did no one qualified for any other events.

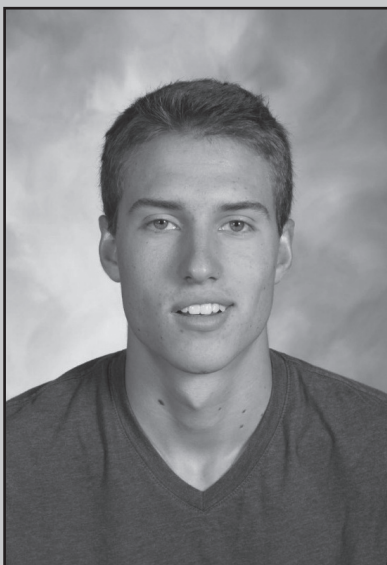
The Indoor State Track Meet will be held on Saturday March 26 in Charleston, Illinois.

Male Athlete of the Month

Nick Wondaal has run cross country and track all four years at Illiana. Recently, he qualified for the Indoor Track State meet at Charleston, Illinois on Saturday March 26. He qualified for the state meet at Hillsdale University on February 27 by running a 4:28 mile and placing first in the competition.

"You get what you put in," says Wondaal. "This sport is all about putting in hard work and getting solid training. I'm blessed to have the opportunity to have great coaches and teammates to push me."

Wondaal hopes to place high at indoor state; he is now ranked 2nd in the mile.



Female Athlete of the Month

Heather Wiltjer has been playing softball for 11 years and says she's always grown up around baseball and softball. Playing varsity since her freshman year, Heather enjoys pitching and hitting and is always looking to up her game. Teammates say she is hard worker and likes to have fun.

"Hanging out with my teammates is probably my favorite part though," says Wiltjer. "We spend a lot of time together because our schedule is so short and packed and we got always have fun with it."

Wiltjer hopes to lead her team to a successful season and go as deep into post season as possible.

We are looking to do very well this season," Heather says. "It'll be fun to see how we do, I can't wait."





Junior Vanessa Huizenga battles and maneuvers to get past an opponent at the girls first game of the season.

Photo by Hanna VanderWoude

Bevan returns to coach girls varsity soccer

Victoria Sonowo
Reporter

This season seven-year veteran soccer coach Mr. Chip Bevan has returned to become the Varsity girls coach. He had previously coached the Varsity boys

team and JV girls but unfortunately had to back away from coaching because of restrictions connected to his work schedule. Bevan said, “In January I resumed a new job position with my company which gave me the flexibility to once again coach and the timing worked out where Mr. Turks-

tra had reached out to me that they had needed a new coach and I had the availability, so I decided to come back and coach again.” Bevan is optimistic for the season and hopes to take the girls into winning conference this year. He even envisions the girls taking their game all the way to the State

Tournament. Junior Kayla VanderZee said, “I’m looking forward to going far because we have a really stacked team and a lot of good underclassmen, which will help us to go farther.” Bevan believes in the vision of scoring goals on a team, but sees the word

G.O.A.L.S. as an acronym. G for God, O for Others, A for Attitude, L for Leadership, and S for being a Servant. “It’s not necessarily about the games that we win but about having fun with the team and playing to glorify God’s name in all that we do,” said Senior Claire Beezehold.

Boys track names new assitant coach

Marissa Johnson
Reporter

The boy’s track and field team has undergone a coaching transition this year. Mr. Jim Piaskowy has taken over after long-time coach Jeff White stepped down; Mrs. Debbie Ohm has joined as an assistant coach. Jim Piaskowy, head coach, said nothing substantial has changed since he became the head coach. The team continues to function as it did under White’s guidance. Piaskowy said he expects nothing but the best from the boys. The team does devotions each week, and they try to have a message after each devotions. He added that this training is not just physical, but also mental.

Piaskowy said, “They’re [the boys] strong at all the events. We have a lot of depth in each event.” This is Debbie Ohm’s first time ever coaching a track team, and she says it’s been great. Ohm feels there is no pressure at all of being a female coach coaching a boys track team. Ohm said, “They [the boys] have been great. They’ve just been welcoming me. It’s great.” Ohm’s have been doing the usual routine, which are plyos, running, drills, and more to prepare the boys for upcoming meets. Junior Justin Gaddis said, “The new coach is good and showing us some good stuff.” Ohms is a tough coach, according to Gaddis, but she trains them well and encourages them.



Photo by Jennifer DeBoer

Freshman Emma Groot hands off to Junior Mia Verhagen for the 4x400 relay at Friday’s meet.

Girls track runs well at indoor conference

Jacob Thompson
Co-Sports Editor

The girls track team had its indoor conference finals on Friday, March 18 and placed 5th overall. The girls performed well many placing very well. Senior Jenny DeBoer placed first out of 22 shot putters

throwing 33 feet and 10 inches, while Junior Nia Fuller placed third out of 18 long jumpers. Junior Deborah Smith placed second in triple jump losing to the event’s winner by only 6 inches. Junior Eden Schipper talks about how much the team had improved from last year’s conference.

“Everyone is working so hard and showing so much improvement,” says Schipper. “The freshmen are even showing so much potential.” Some standout freshman performances included Cate Peerbolte (5th in the mile), and Emma Groot (lead runner in 4 x 400 relay).

Editorial

Time to acknowledge, celebrate growing diversity

Over the past two decades, Illiana's demographics have changed. In the past, Illiana has been almost entirely Dutch. In 1945, a number of Reformed churches of Dutch descent organized the school. Illiana bled orange, not green. For the second half of the twentieth century, Vander-somethings, Something-smas, and De-somethings populated the school.

Things started changing around the 90s. Different ethnicities from black to Italian to Latino started showing up in the hallways. Names like Lopez and Natale joined the Vanders and -smas in the yearbook. Although the change was turbulent and rocky at times, the school benefitted. Illiana became a better picture of the kingdom of God.

Despite the growing diversity, Illiana is still a predominantly Dutch school. Most of our supporting churches are entirely or almost entirely Dutch. That is not a bad thing. In fact, it speaks to the community's commitment to Christian education.

The problem is not being Dutch. The problem is

talking and acting as if everyone else is. Statements like "Well that's because we're Dutch," or "People at this school can't dance; they're all Dutch!" or "Everyone here is a cheap Dutch person anyway," simply are not true for over a third of the student body. Worse than that, such comments ignore that same

ing to find one's place is even more frightening. And why? To preserve the precious sensibilities of a bunch of "Dutch" people who can't even pronounce their last names properly?

An essential part of Christian education means learning and growing from other perspectives within the church. At the begin-

Dutch or non-Dutch, but they shouldn't cling to it so tightly that they forget that our shared relationship in Christ runs much deeper and stronger than any ethnic heritage. Illiana's mission statement contains no specifications for hair or eye color. We are a school of different backgrounds and cultures bound by the love of Christ.

Besides, by losing a "If you ain't Dutch, you ain't much" mentality, Illiana gains so much more. Knowing people from different backgrounds creates many opportunities for new experiences. The best way to eat an authentic Korean or Italian or Chinese dish is to eat it at someone's house. Additionally, Latin and Gospel music are vibrant and unique. Whether it's a simple thing like trying tamales for the first time at a friend's house or something more meaningful like attending a church service radically different in length and style, Illiana students have much to learn from each other.

These differences should and can enrich Illiana, much more than they should ever divide. Because despite any differences, there is neither Dutch nor non-Dutch, but Christ is all in all.

"We are a school of different backgrounds and cultures bound by the love of Christ."

part of our student body as if they don't matter. Emphasizing one group at the expense of others destroys community within the school.

Additionally, for any student first coming to a new school, meeting new friends and finding one's way is a daunting task. For students who have no clue what olie bollen or Dutch Bingo means, try-

ning of the early church, the Holy Spirit revealed to the Hebrews, that the blessings of Scripture were promised to Jews and Gentiles alike, prompting the Jews to open their house churches to them. The Gentiles' presence proved to be a blessing.

We are not disparaging Dutch people or culture. Illiana students should embrace their heritage,

Learning courage from my two grandmas

Cancer stinks. I'm not basing this on the first hand experience of having cancer, but rather from the view point of a little girl whose grandmas both had cancer.

My grandma DeBoer had breast cancer. She lived through it and is actually my only grandparent still living. Though she doesn't like to talk about it, I still think of her as a strong, amazing woman who doesn't need to flaunt what she's gone through, letting (almost bragging) everyone know about what she's undergone.



Jennifer DeBoer

Co-editor in chief

Four of my aunts, her daughters, had/have some sort of scare with breast cancer. It is amazing how they stay so strong and positive and then I look at my grandma and think they had a great example of how to act under these circumstances. I guess it may have just been a blessing in disguise that my grandma had this happen to her.

My other grandma, Grandma Kooy, had colon cancer. Sadly, she passed away from it when I was about five or six.

My mom always tells the story of taking her to chemotherapy and my grandpa Kooy watching my sister Christy and me. One time he fell asleep and Christy and I snuck outside. When my mom and grandma got back, they saw a recycling bin overturned under the crabapple tree. They asked Grandpa if we went outside and he insisted we didn't despite the evidence. For the next couple of months my grandma found crabapples hidden all around their house—from inside pots, the tops of high shelves.

I don't remember doing that, or what my grandma's reaction was to the crabapples. Some of the only memories I have of my grandma are in a hospital bed in her living room. I do remember her cooking in the kitchen though. She had only recently been diagnosed. She was happy scooting me around so she could cook dinner. And then my memory is like a blank until she is sick with a sunken face in that hospital bed. I don't even remember when she passed away.

I guess I just wish I had some more time to spend with her. I do miss her, but with the limited memories I have of her it's hard to know if I miss her or just the idea of her.

So yeah cancer stinks. It can tear families apart with death. And it leaves scars—physically and emotionally. Thankfully my two grandmas were tough until the end. I don't want to say they never questioned God because I'm not them, but now I know one of them thanks Him for His healing mercy every day while the other praises Him every day in heaven.

the Echo

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Letters to the editor can be submitted to the advisor or sent to the school. All letters must be signed and must not exceed 250 words. They will be printed provided there is enough room and content is not offensive to the general public. Names will not be wfor doing so.

Editorial Cartoon



If the wooden shoe doesn't fit.....

The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at theillianaecho@gmail.com