



# Seniors celebrate their final year with trip to D.C.

Lucas VanderWoude  
Editor-in-Chief

The senior class took a trip to the nation's capital from Oct. 17 to Oct. 21 to celebrate their final year of high school.

While the trip has been enjoyed by many past senior classes, the trip had some changes made to it that contributed to its higher cost. Because the bussing company was unwilling to drive through the night due to their insurance, the students had to miss school all day on Tuesday and stay one extra night outside Pittsburgh during the ride home.

The students saw many notable memorials on the first day of the trip, including the Vietnam War Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Korean War Memorial, and Thomas Jefferson Me-

morial. During the bus rides to the memorials, hired tour guides gave students background information on the sites that they would be seeing. When the students got off the bus and toured the memorials, they stayed with their homerooms and split into separate groups led by different tour guides. After guides finished their tour, the students were free to explore the memorials.

On Wednesday, the students visited Arlington Cemetery and witnessed the changing of the guard and the wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. The wreath-layers for the senior class were Janna van Belle, Abbey Helmus, Josh Turkstra, and Lucas Winters. These students were selected by their teachers for their contributions to the school.

Students enjoyed the trip. "I really liked Mount Ver-



Photo courtesy of Jeff DeVries

A group of students snap a photo with Indiana Representative Frank Mrvan. This group of students decided to visit the Capitol and Longworth building during their free time.

non and the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception," said Heidi Gorter, one of the students that attended. "Vernon was so beautiful and historic, and the Shrine was so big and

beautiful."

"I liked visiting the Capitol building," said Elliot VanderGriend, another student who attended. "Meeting [Congressman] Frank Mrvan

was super cool because we were told he was busy and couldn't meet with us. I spent a lot of quality time with my friends and made a lot of good memories."

# Sadie Hawkins dance attracts over 300 students



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Students dance the Cupid Shuffle in the ARC as part of the Sadie Hawkins dance.

Abigail DeBlock  
Reporter

Around 300 Illiana Christian students attended the Sadie Hawkins dance in the ARC on Oct. 14. The dance was open to all grade levels of students who attend Illiana.

For senior Nick Neri, it was his first time attending the Sadie Hawkins dance. He said, "It was a fun experience being able to go to the dance with my friends and underclassmen. I thought the night went well and I can't

wait for the next dance."

Junior Nolee Van Drunen, had a similar experience, adding "...it was fun to get ready with my friends and go and dance with them."

Hunter Siebert, a sophomore, said, "...everyone working there was very nice and did a good job."

Parent volunteers chaperoned the dance. One of the chaperones, Tracey Bandstra, said she enjoys seeing what students are wearing and "watching the mass exodus [of students] when a slow song comes on." She

added that the students were well behaved.

Illiana's Event Coordinator, Terri Schaaf, prepared for the dance by setting up the decorations, finding parent volunteers, advertising for the event, and organizing clean-up afterward. She concluded the night "went wonderfully."

Adjustments were made to the check-in procedure as there is still ongoing construction at the south doors. This meant students were able to catch a glimpse of the dance before checking in.

# Students investigate new mystery-themed yearbook at Spire Party

Isabella Girolimon  
Reporter

Students and 2023 graduates gathered in the commons on Friday, Oct. 6, to receive their yearbooks at the annual Spire party.

The 2023 yearbook's theme was "God's Perfect Mystery," and the book laid out to appear like an investigator's room in a police

procedural. This year's yearbook was the creative efforts of head editors Priya Sen and Ellie Kamphuis, both graduates.

Senior Alyssa Mulder, a current editor of the Spire, said of the new book, "I liked the book. The theme was really different from anything people had done in the past. I also liked the verse [Romans 16:25-27] behind the theme. I thought they pulled

the theme through the book really well."

Senior Kelsee Smit, who attended the Spire party, said, "When I first walked in, it was almost overwhelming, with people shoving yearbooks in my face. But after a little while, I got used to the commotion, and I really enjoyed the night. It gave me a chance to talk with some graduates I hadn't seen in a while."



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Students gathered in the Commons from 7-9 on October 6 to collect yearbooks from Spire staff and sign their friends' books. Many graduates from last year also attended the party.



## Choose your friends wisely, good friends are hard to find

When you grow up, you normally will make friends in school and they will become your best friends for a very long time. This was my experience until I got to high school.



Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

I went to Highland Christian where everyone knew everyone and once you were friends with someone you were normally friends with them until you graduated in eighth grade.

I thought these people would be my friends forever, but that was simply not the case.

I went to a different high school than most of my close friends. During freshman year I tried to hang out with them every chance I got. I started to realize towards the end of freshman year that both me and a lot of my friends were starting to move in very different directions. I realized that some of the friendships I had, for about five years, weren't helping me with my mental, physical, emotional, or spiritual growth. I knew some friendships needed to end. It was scary and made me feel like a bad person, but I knew it would be the best thing for me in the end, and it was.

Jump to sophomore year. I started hanging out with a very different group of people who were nothing like my old friend group. Again, I wasn't surrounding myself with the right people. I broke off from a couple of those friends, and also kept some who were good friends to me. The more I think of it, the more I think those couple of friends I left saw me as a friend of convenience. I was there when they needed me, but they were never there when I needed them. I started to realize that I wanted friendships that go both ways, where both people put in an equal amount of effort to make the friendship work.

I noticed that my closest friends had become the people who took the time to understand me, my life, and my goals. The friends who can always tell if there is something wrong. I wanted to be friends with people with whom I can sit in silence without it being awkward. I wanted to be friends with people who built each other up and encouraged one another in all aspects of their lives.

Over the past three years I've realized I want to be an encouraging person who is kind to as many people as possible. To do that I realized I needed to hang out with people like that. When people say "you are who you surround yourself with" they aren't joking.

Closing off old friendships and starting new friendships can be a scary experience, but it can also be the experience you need to become who you are meant to be.



The boys gather in the ARC to listen to Davids's speech before getting their wings.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

## Split assemblies bring students closer

Reese Jansma

Reporter

On Tuesday, Sept. 27, Illiana's administration held a school wide assembly, splitting the student body by sex with the girls going in the gym where there were addressed by counselor Melanie Benes and Spiritual Director Craig Slings while the boys went to the ARC where they were addressed by Head of School Lance Davids.

Benes said, "The focus of the girls' assembly was on social media. It was a simple reminder about how social media can be positive or negative. The focus was also on their identity in Christ, and not believing what you see or hear on social media,

but rather listening to what Christ says. What led to this assembly was ongoing issues with social media and people saying hurtful things."

Slings said, "Mr. Davids initiated the assembly and split for specifics with girls and guys since there are differences between both. I am hoping to see ladies better stand up for themselves and be an example and to encourage and protect others."

Benes added, "An outcome for the community would be treating each other with respect, building each other up, . . . , and being reminded of the truth about who we are in Christ. Some students may feel like they have heard this before many times, so if that's true what's standing in

the way of us living it out and doing it on a regular basis?"

Head of School, Mr. Lance Davids ran the boys' assembly. He said, "in a nutshell the focus of the assembly was trying to get the men to be men of integrity. I really focused on their language, how they treat women, to not demean people, and honesty."

Senior Zander Weemhoff said, "The boys' assembly was about how to be better Christian men. We learned that lots of people make mistakes. There is a lot of time spent on our phones, but our relationship with God should matter more than that."

Davids is also hosting "Wing Wednesday" for the boys once a month. Those who sign up meet for lunch over chicken

wings to talk. Davids explained, "I did this to keep it in front of them because too many times we talk about it and then forget about it and nothing changes."

Weemhoff, who signed up, said, "We are meeting for wings, to talk about how to grow with God, swear less, and show Jesus more in our relationships and in life."

Davids added, "Everyone here who takes a wing is going to be held accountable, not only by me, by each other." He added, "It's about holding each other accountable and allowing yourself to be held accountable. We have great kids working hard, but there's always things we need to improve on."



Mr. DeBoer flips burgers for staff at the picnic.

Photo by Jeff DeVries

## At fall picnic, students have fun despite being cold

Kenadie Piepenbrink

Reporter

The fall picnic, originally scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 6, occurred on a gray and cool Friday, Oct. 7, due to the previous day's rainy weather.

Located on the soccer field, the picnic lasted 45 minutes. A few students grilled, a significant number of students ordered food through Door Dash or Uber Eats, and many, many bought grilled hot dogs, chips, and drinks from the Student Council.

Dorothy Leep, a sophomore, said, "I thought the picnic was good, a little cold, but good." Leep said she really enjoyed being

able to talk and hangout with her friends who are in a different lunch hour than her.

Addison Kinkade, another sophomore, said her favorite part of the picnic was "seeing everyone just hanging out, especially because it's our last year with everybody, because every year changes with people graduating and new students coming in."

Everyone interviewed said the picnic was great and they enjoyed having the longer lunch and being able to talk and hangout with people who they don't usually see during their lunch hour. They said they are looking forward to next spring's picnic, when the weather will hopefully be nicer.

## Day in the life of resource officer Dave DeBoer, staying alert in midst of routines

Cheyenne DeJong

Reporter

Officer Dave DeBoer, the head resource officer at Illiana Christian, is appreciated by many students while playing an important role in the Illiana community.

"Everybody here is very nice, so I feel drawn in," DeBoer said. "I spend most of my day talking to nice people. Everybody who works here constantly talks about how much they enjoy working here. People are quickly surprised how kind and welcoming everybody is."

He often makes efforts to participate in "Question of the Day" in Ms. Johnson's English classes and he enjoys answering and coming up with questions.

Along with making sure that students exit the school safely from the parking lot after school, DeBoer also has also made sure to make students feel welcome and secure.

"I spend a lot of time walking, moving around, and I try to see what kind of needs I can meet with the student body. I try to get a feel of what is going

on with important things within the school and make sure everyone who goes in and out of the building is accounted for the best I can," said DeBoer.

Officer DeBoer is prepared at all times, whether supervising outdoor activities or simply walking the halls. He claims he is never bored and manages to walk 4 to 5 miles a day while at Illiana. As he walks the halls, he constantly has an eye to the building's safety.

"One thing to think about is worst case scenarios and potential problems from people outside the school," DeBoer explained. "I don't think people are usually thinking about the doors being locked or the parking lot or the gym class going outside, which is something normal for students. They tend to tune out the outside world which is good, but we are concerned about what is going on in the outside world and making sure no problems leak their way in. We are trained to be prepared at all times, trying to be vigilant, trying to be focused because it can be a long day of waiting for nothing to happen."



# Three profiles offer peak inside GO Day



Photo by Jeff Devries  
*Lainey Schoon (far left) and her classmates do clean-up at the Indiana Dunes.*

**Joy Ramsey**  
**Reporter**

**Lainey Schoon**

Along with a few other homerooms, Mr.Zandstra's junior homeroom spent Go Day at the Indiana Dunes beach and trails. One student, Lainey Schoon, said she really enjoyed going there to volunteer because it was a very scenic and cute place but they were also helping the community.

While at the beach,

Schoon and other classmates helped by getting to cut overgrown trees, cleaning trash sitting on the beach, and cleaning out a dirty pond. Schoon added that she would enjoy going back next year because the workers were all very kind and it was the perfect place to send high school students to volunteer.

Schoon added, "I think it was more enjoyable doing these at the beach versus a park because it was a gorgeous place so it made it even more enjoyable."

**Olivia Klomp**  
Junior Olivia Klomp spent Go Day with her homeroom at Echo School in South Holland. Echo is a school specifically for kids and adults with special needs who need specialists to help teach them both academic and life skills.

While at the school, Klomp and her classmates helped to clean their student kitchen, to organize their mock grocery store used to teach the students important life skills, and to set up a new library for the students to use. Klomp said that she loved spending the day helping in a physical way but also getting to know the students personally. She would love to go back next year to get to see these students again.

She said she really enjoyed getting to interact with these students and getting to know them, adding "even though we were supposed to be helping them, they really helped me and definitely made my day."



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook  
*Seniors Jenna Landman and Sophia Oostema make crafts with clients at New Star.*

**Jenna Landman**  
For her last Go Day at Illiana, senior Jenna Landman spent the day with her homeroom at New Star in Chicago Heights. New Star is a service facility that helps people with disabilities.

While there Jenna, along with the rest of Mr.Kamphuis's homeroom, spent the day doing crafts with the clients there and helping them with yard work.

Landman said, "My fa-

vorite part of the day was meeting a client who created his own music and wanted to give all of us a special performance." She also said although she enjoys having Go Day in the fall, she liked it better in the spring as an end of year event.

Landman added, "Go Day is a fun experience for all of us, especially us seniors, because we get to help out those who need it, and it gives us a chance to get away from school for the day."

# First movie night at Illiana, students gathered on lawn, enjoyed 'Cars'

**Gabriella Costello**  
**Reporter**

Student Council sponsored Illiana's first Movie on the Lawn on Saturday, Sept. 30 at 7 pm. The movie night was originally set for last spring but due to some bad weather the event was pushed into the fall of this school year.

The night featured the film "Cars, " the movie having been selected after Student Council conducted a poll of the student body. Somewhere between 50-75 students attended the movie. Tech coordinator, Mr. Al Dykshorn, helped with the tech set-up.

Student Council co-sponsor Sara Johnson said, "The event was strictly made to build community

within the student body."

"We were very happy with the outcome! We had no goals for what we wanted the attendance to be, so we were happy with the number that did attend," said Kelly Aardsma, the other Student Council co-sponsor.

Student Council has hopes of doing it again, but they are trying to work through Homecoming first. At the moment they aren't sure if they want to make it an annual event or do it more often, but the point of cold weather has put a major pause in that idea.

"I enjoyed hanging out with friends and watching 'Cars,'" said sophomore Caedon Fennema.

A number of students said that they wished the screen was bigger and that

there wasn't so much light spilling from the building near the track. The problem didn't seem to get in the way of the fun.

Freshman Rebeca Bultema said, "I liked being able to sit back and chill, eat popcorn, and watch a movie with my friends."

"I enjoyed the movie night because the concessions were cheap and I had never seen 'Cars' before," said Felicity Nieves.

Student Council sold typical movie concessions like popcorn, soda, and candy, items that proved popular.

Sophomore Addison Burch liked the concessions but envisioned a future with more choices such as "hot dogs, pizza, hamburgers, and ribs" at future movie nights.



Photo by Sara Johnson  
*Students gather on lawn to watch "Cars" on Saturday, Sept. 30.*

# Principal search continues, future candidates interviewed to replace Boonstra after 24 years

**Ellie Ratliff**  
**Reporter**

Illiana has put together a search committee to find someone to take over Mr. Peter Boonstra's role as principal after this year. The search committee has been at work for 8 months. As most of you know, Boonstra

is retiring from his role as Illiana Christian's principal after what will be 24 years in the position. The committee has been advertising for his replacement as well as contacting people that they believe might prove a good fit for the school.

According to Mr. Lance Davids, the Head of School,

the committee has discovered a few promising candidates in the last eight months. One they even flew out from California for interviews, afterward offering him the position, but the candidate declined the offer, choosing to stay in California.

Davids also said that the

committee will probably continue to look for potential candidates through the end of the year. When asked about looking in house for his replacement, Mrs. Rachel Drost, Illiana's Assistant Principal and a member of the search committee, said, "All options are on the table. We are trying to

discern the person who God wants that to be."

The committee is looking for someone who has the skill set that they need for this position and they are hopeful that God will allow them to find that person. Bonstra's last day as principal will be July 31, 2024.



# It's Fall Y'all

## Four activities and a recipe to celebrate the season



Indiana Dune National Parks hiking trail in the fall

Photo courtesy of Chicago Tribune

**Giannia O’Neal-Schultz**  
**Arts and Leisure Editor**

This fall is filled with activities to do indoors and outdoors. This fall you can have fun indoors by just laying back in cozy pajamas and having a fall movie marathon. Here are a few movie suggestions, The Nightmare before Christmas, Halloween-town, The Haunted Mansion, and ParaNorman.

For those who enjoy outdoor activities here are a few things you can do.



County line Or-chards barn

Photo courtesy of Chicago Tribune

County Line Orchard offers many attractions, but these are a few of their most popular ones: pump-

kin patch, apple picking, hayride, corn maze. It’s located in Hobart, Indiana, and admission to do all the activities is \$14.

Harvest Tyme Family Fun is having a Fall Festival that starts September 30th and ends on October 29th. Harvest Tyme Family Fun, which is located in Lowell, Indiana, is open on Saturdays and Sundays from 10 am to 6 pm. General admission is \$19.95 online and \$24.95 in person; kids under 2 get free admission.



### Ice Cream Sandwich Recipe

Ice cream sandwich to munch on! Photo and recipe courtesy of Haley Nicole

1. Recipe: Preheat your oven to 325 degrees.

2. Remove the Nestle cookie dough from the package, using your palms, create little balls with the cookie dough and press down flat onto the cookie sheet. Repeat this for all of the cookies.

3. Remove the sugar cookie pumpkins from the packaging and press the sugar
- cookie down on top of the cookie.

4. Bake for 10 minutes.

5. Allow the cookies to cool fully.

6. Once the cookies are no longer hot, sandwich 1 ice cream scoop in between two cookies to make an ice cream sandwich.

7. Repeat, you will get about 10 ice cream sand-

The Indiana Dunes is the best place to take a fall walk and enjoy the crisp weather. The Dunes are also a great viewing to see the Sandhill Crane migration that is happening this fall. A standard entrance pass is \$15.00-25.00.



Harvest Tyme Family truck

Courtesy of Harvest Tyme Family

# Chapel committee planing behind the scenes

**Kailyda Anderson**  
**News Editor**

We all know what happens on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: chapel. The student body sits together in the ARC and watches the chapel committee present skits on subthemes, lead worship, host speakers, and lead games. But do we know what goes on behind the scenes? How do they plan every chapel? How do they write their skits?

Since there are ten seniors on the chapel committee, they split up into groups. Each group takes a specific day and plans it themselves. They have one week to plan, and they always plan two weeks ahead. Everyone works and writes on the scripts. Songs, skits, and games are based on what the specific chapel theme is

about. The smaller teams come up with most of the ideas for each individual chapel. The big main ideas were developed this past summer.

Anna Bauer, member of the chapel committee, said, “We always work together to brainstorm. We make it enjoyable but still

beneficial. Communication is key to successful chapels. When we all communicate with each other, everything is easier and works out better.”

Mr. Craig Slings and Mrs. Rachel Drost oversee the chapel committee. They read through scripts the students have



Members of Chapel committee working on planning the upcoming chapels

Photo by Kelsee Smit



Seniors Nolan Bouman and Zander Weemhoff speak about the 5 love languages

Photo by Jeff DeVries

written as well as check that there aren’t any theological conflicts. They’re there to answer questions and give direction as students plan. They also look ahead to themes coming up and gather information that would help committee members with their planning.

Slings said, “I am very impressed with how well this group works together.

Each chapel is assigned a group and the groups have been mixed up for each chapel we’ve done so far. I have seen everyone digging in, putting the time and effort in, and having fun. There’s a lot of laughter as they are definitely having a good time working together. Mrs. Drost did a great job in developing the overall game plan with the team before I arrived.”





Mrs. Rachel Monroe conducts the Wind Ensemble on October 5th while they are playing Spirit Lake Overture by Robert Sheldon.

Photo by Dan Blom

# Brains behind concert song selections

Lydia O’Riley

Sports Editor

Many times, people are excited to see Illiana’s concerts to watch and hear all the hard work the students put in to learn the music and perform their very best. However, few stop to ponder how much time and effort it takes the directors to look into songs and decide what their students should perform.

Both Kathy Sliemers,

choral director of four groups, and Rachel Monroe, instrumental director of four different instrumental groups, spend a lot of time choosing the different songs each of the groups play.

Monroe said she considers a few things when picking music for each of the bands: “Quality of music, is it worth learning? Strength of my players and the instruments of the group. What skills does my band need to improve on? Is it interesting to play

from a student’s perspective? If they only play the same three notes for the entire piece, that isn’t going to help them get better at music.”

Sliemers said, “I look at all sorts of things - style, musical elements I want to teach, like time signature or key signature, lyrics, variety within a choir and variety between choirs.” She added that she looks at the difficulty of the songs and how well each of the choirs can sing.

Each of the directors allow the students to choose what songs they would like to do for the Pops concert in the spring and vote on their favorites. They are always open to suggestions for concerts, but do have the final say on what songs are performed during the Fall concerts.

When talking about incorporating different cultures into songs, Sliemers and Monroe get animated.

“I think it is VERY important

to do songs from a variety of styles and cultures,” said Sliemers. “I know it can be hard and sometimes frustrating to learn songs in other languages, but God created people all around the world and gave them gifts in music just like we enjoy. It is good for us to open our eyes and ears to hear and learn what some of those gifts and styles are.”

Monroe explained that playing different styles from different cultures can be really fun when you learn how to play them well.

# Drama Department to take audience back to 70s

Kaelyn Yonkman

Reporter

Illiana’s Drama Department will present the fall play, Alice in Wonderland, on Nov. 2-4, with two showings on the 4th.

The department chose Alice in Wonderland for several reasons, one being the large cast size. According to Mr. Jim Kamphuis, the set designer, they try to seek plays that need a large cast because “we have a lot of really talented students.” The drama department wants to get as many people involved as possible. The play also has multiple sets, another important factor.

“There’s a lot of crew people that want to get involved,” Kamphuis said. “[A] lot of people...don’t want to be under the spotlight.”

Kamphuis added that there’s many talented actors that are part of this production, and we can see all of Illiana students’

“God-given talents on display.”

Another reason Alice in Wonderland was chosen is because of the light system. Last year, for the musical The Lion King, the drama department revamped the whole light system, Kamphuis said. “A show like Alice in Wonderland... involves a lot of cool colors and effects.” He said that there’s a really cool production concept this time, and the play will be different from what people expect.

Annabel Kamphuis, a sophomore who’s playing Tweedledum in the play, said that this is no ordinary Alice in Wonderland, and that it’s 70s themed. “If you like crazy and insane things, you should go see it. It will be the best version of Alice in Wonderland you will ever see.”

“Everyone should come see it,” Mr. Kamphuis said. “It’s going to be really fun.”



Photo by Jeff DeVries

Junior Adia Falvey and others in the play cast rehearse for their upcoming show, “Alice In Wonderland.”



# Boys soccer finishes sectional, conference champs

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

The Varsity Boys soccer team finished the year with a 15-4-1 record, finishing the season with the titles of conference and sectional champions.

The Vikings won their first Sectional Championship in Class 2A against Boone Grove, beating them 5-0 at River Forest on Sept. 7. Senior Chase Poortinga scored a hattrick, and juniors Eli DeGraff and Divine Olikagu added goals as well. The team's season came to an end when they played West Lafayette on Oct. 11 and lost 1-0.

Senior Emmanuel Calix commented, "It was an awesome season. I loved hanging out with the other guys. It shouldn't have ended so soon but I loved every second of it. I'm really thankful to have had that opportunity."

Senior Zander Weemhoff said, "The sophomores on the team stepped up, and we had Eman defending the goal. I'm proud of how we fought through the year. A lot of players have matured, and we have grown together as a team. We are like brothers now instead of teammates, and we know we can go to each other when we need each other. Best wishes for the team next year."



Photo courtesy of Illiana Facebook

Boys varsity soccer crowds around sectional trophy to celebrate sectional win against Boone Grove on Oct. 1. Final score was 6-0.

# Cheer team moves up division, still qualifies for state finals



Photo courtesy of Brooklyn Pierce

Varsity cheer poses for the judges while competing at Pendelton on Oct. 7.

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

The girls competitive cheer team, eight girls coached by Carissa Beezhold and Marcia VanDrunen, qualified for state finals at the semifinals tournament on Saturday, Oct. 21.

The team just moved from division D to C now that Illiana has over 500 students. The move has created more competition for Illiana's team.

Most other teams have 12 or more girls in their division, which does give them

an advantage according to senior Brooklyn Pierce and junior Nolee VanDrunen, who explained that it is hard to build the stunts with only 8 girls. They added that it is easier to tumble and get majority points when everyone on the squad has a certain skill.

The team competed on Oct. 7 against 6 other teams and took 3rd place. VanDrunen said, "It was fun and exciting. We had a lot of energy."

The girls will be competing in semi-state on Oct. 21. Senior Brooklyn Pierce

explained, "All the competitions we go to are school hosting competitions, to see what competitors we have and see the skills we have to gain to later beat them in semi-state, which anyone can come to. Then the top eight teams will make it to state."

Pierce said, "Our current team has been the best team I have had in any of my years here. We are very close, and it is easy for everyone to be a leader on our team. We all communicate very well, we stay positive and keep good energy."

# Varsity volleyball gets 'upper hand' during sectional finals

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

The Illiana Girls Varsity Volleyball are the 2023 2A Sectional champions. On Saturday Oct. 14 the Volleyball team won against Andean with a score of 3-2, the team's overall score this season was 22-10.

Senior Delanie Voss said, "It feels great to be sectional champions because our team has worked very hard this whole season; we have been preparing for this moment, so to finally succeed felt really good."

The team took 2nd in the Greater South Shore Conference, and their play has improved steadily as the season has drawn toward its end. In the first round of sectionals the Vikings played Lighthouse

College Prep and won with a score 3-0. In the second round they played Lake Station Edison and won again by a score of 3-0.

Delanie Voss, who was selected Player of the Match by Max Preps, led the Vikes with 1 ace, 21 kills, 5 blocks, 1 assist, and 18 digs.

Voss said, "It feels pretty good to be selected to be the star player; my teammates really helped me become who I am as a player. I want to be successful so that my team is also successful."

The game against Andean was challenging but Illiana was able to push through and gain the upper hand to win the game.

Junior Alexa Miedema said, "The game against Andean was super fun. It kept us lively through the whole thing and we fought back really hard."



Photo courtesy of Alexa Miedema

Girls varsity volleyball poses for photo with sectional trophy after winning against Andean on Oct. 14. Final score was 3-2.





# Viking sports briefs



## Boys tennis finish season winning sectionals, share goals for next season

Lydia O’Riley

Sports Editor

The Illiana boys’ tennis team wrapped up its season with a 10-9 record during its regular season. The boys won their conference 6-0.

The boys won their sectional semifinal on Sept. 27. Silas Olthof (6-0, 6-2) and Wyatt Jones (6-0, 6-1) won their singles matches. Doubles players, Gise Gibson and Hunter DeYoung won (6-0, 6-0), as well as Tyler Groenewold and Brandon De Young who won (6-0, 6-1).

Although the boys



Photo by Jim Kamphuis  
*Sophomore Silas Olthof gets ready to receive a serve from another team.* had a good overall season, they did not advance past the sectional tournament. Hunter DeYoung, senior, said that he was happy with how far the team went, especially since they were “young and kind of inexperienced.”

Senior, Gise Gibson said, “To improve the tennis team, more athletic guys need to join, and we need more training in the off season.”

Junior Chase Lindemulder said his favorite memory was playing doubles with Gise Gibson at Cal Tech because “we absolutely slaughtered them.”



Photo by Jeff DeVries  
*Coach Top runs with Coach Fennema at Lake Central Invite on Aug. 26.*

## Coach Top wins Coach of the Year

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

Deb Top, the business and digital apps teacher at Illiana, was nominated this fall for the Coach of the Year for AA Girls

Track and Field by the Indiana Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches.

Top was one of the eight coaches in the state of Indiana who were nominated for the award, and she was the only female coach nominated for the award.

“I feel humbled and honored,” said Top. “There are so many great coaches that I have come into contact with over my 35 years of coaching who have taught me and inspired me through their examples. I feel motivated to keep pushing myself to learn, grow, and improve as a track coach. God led me into coaching many years ago and gave me a passion for track. With His help, I hope to continue to coach, train, and influence athletes both in track and in life.”

## Strong soccer season ends on disappointing note

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

The girls soccer season came to an unexpected end on Oct. 2 when the Vikings fell to the Wheeler Bearcats in a 3-2 loss in the opening game of state tournament play.

The girls’ final record was

8-7-1, and they captured 2nd place in their conference. This season the soccer team has made many improvements and memories.

Junior Maddie Terpstra said, “My favorite part of the season is playing with the girls and getting to know them on and off the field also and winning.”

Coach Vanessa Huizenga said, “Our biggest challenge this season has been injuries. We have suffered some bigger injuries than we would have liked, but the girls continued to give it their all and work hard for their teammates. I am proud of their perseverance through those tough games!”

## Cross country advances to regionals, despite bad weather at sectionals

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

### Girls Cross Country

Illiana’s girls cross country team advanced all seven of the varsity runners from Sectionals to Regionals from the race held at Highland High School on Oct. 14. Runners Avery Olthof, Ella Olthof, Adeline Mulder, Ellie Ratliff, Simone Bergerson, and Nora Filler placed 4th overall out of 14 teams.

Senior Avery Olthof said, “Sectionals was rainy and muddy, but overall a super fun race. Our team is great at overcoming challenges, so we left the meet with smiles on our faces.” Regionals will be hosted at New Prairie High School on Oct. 21.

Coach Luke Fennema said, “The weather was not optimal



Photo courtesy of ichs\_crosscountry  
*Senior Avery Olthof and junior Ella Olthof run at the Highland Sectional Invite.*

for good performances, but most of our girls were close to their season best times even in that weather and the huge mud puddles. As a team we were projected to finish 4th and we finished 4th only 3 points behind Highland to whom we

lost to earlier in the season. So I think there is a good chance we can get past Highland this coming Saturday at Regionals. I was very happy with their performance and they all had great attitudes about the race too.”



Photo courtesy of illianaxctf  
*Nolan Bouwman, Cody Aardsma, Josh Wondaal, and Dane Scheeringa run at the Highland Sectional Invite on Oct. 14.*

### Boys cross country

Illiana’s boys cross country advanced all seven of the varsity runners from Sectionals to Regionals. The boys placed 2nd out

of 16 teams at sectionals at Highland High School on Oct. 14. Going to Regionals will be Jarvis Mickles, Nolan Bouwman, Josh Wondaal, Cody Aardsma, Dane

Scheeringa, Luke Bouwman, and Isaac Gorter.

The raining weather slowed many people down but not all. Senior Jarvis Mickles said, “It was the muddiest race I have ever had, but some people do race better in the rain. Still, overall the times were slower across the board.”

The boys will be running in Regionals at New Prairie High School on Oct. 21.

Senior Nolan Bouwman said, “The course was super wet and it was raining the whole time we raced. The rain took a few seconds off our times, but overall we raced very well. The conditions did slow us down, but they slowed everyone down. We are super excited for Regionals.”

## Athletes of the Month

### Jarvis Mickels and Avery Olthof

Senior, Avery Olthof and senior, Jarvis Mickles are October’s male and female athletes of the month.

Cross country coach Luke Fennema said, “Both Avery and Jarvis lead by example. They are very hard workers who make sure to do the little things right, like sleeping and stretching. They are fierce competitors and I always know that I can rely on them to give their best in every race.”

Fennema explained that both Avery and Jarvis have grown a lot over their years running for cross country. “(They) have become smart racers and excellent leaders for the team,” said Fennema.

Both Mickles and Olthof got 2nd in their conference meet and led the teams to 1st place conference wins.

Issac Gorter, junior, said that Jarvis was a good leader because “he gives 100 percent every day.”

Senior Nora Filler said that Avery is a good leader because of how she serves her teammates. “When we were driving, she put the sun visor down because she knew I liked it. She said she wasn’t doing it for herself, but for me,” Filler said. “She also would play Taylor Swift in the car for us because she knew a lot of the girls liked her.” Filler added that Avery always looked out for the needs of the team and was always there for them.





# Editorial

## Building a better community

*How every Illiana student can create a more welcoming environment*

On Sept. 27, the school administration held a special assembly focused really on one question: How can we make the Illiana Christian High School community a better place to be in? As Christians, we are designed to love one another and care for each other, but not every person at Illiana is nice to others or cares for them. Hence the assembly. But how can we improve our community?

Ms. Sara Johnson had some great thoughts about this topic. She said, “I think Illiana is made up of many small communities, and while I think trying to change the WHOLE Illiana community is a noble goal, I wonder if perhaps we would be better served by improving the smaller groups that make the whole. Instead of asking ‘How can we improve the Illiana community?’ let’s ask ‘How can we improve homeroom?’ or ‘How can we improve the soccer team?’ or ‘How can we improve Stu-Co?’ Then when we’ve made the changes to the smaller groups we are in, perhaps we’ll see a change in the larger whole.”

Johnson added, “I think how you improve a community depends on the community you are in and what’s not working in that particular community. If I had to

answer this for Illiana, one thing I would say is fear. We are scared to be vulnerable with each other because we fear rejection and judgment. This fear keeps everyone - parents, students, teachers, and other community members - from really getting to know others and

do to make this community better is to keep talking about how to make the community better.”

There are so many ways people can benefit from making the community a better place. Mrs. Melanie Benes, one of the school counselors, said, “People can ben-

should be careful about what we post and how we stir unnecessary drama.

Mr. Davids said, “My goal of the assembly was to try and improve how we act around here. To be direct and purposeful about what we as men say, how we treat women, and how to be more honest about our actions. To work and change a culture, you need 10% of people to do it. I think most of the gentlemen heard the message, but acting upon it is what matters. That is why I will keep doing assemblies to enhance change around here.”

We want to challenge the student body to heed this advice. Within your smaller communities, effect change. As members of teams or clubs or casts or choirs, start encouraging those around you to be the people God created them to be. And there’s no better way to do that than to model it yourself. Be vulnerable, be truthful, be kind. Be people of integrity.

We can all make an effort to do better and make Illiana a better community to be in, a community of comfort, love, and peace with God at the center of it all.

Community is built when people are honest and true and vulnerable with one another. . . .

building community with them. I think another problem is judgment and comparison. We make snap judgments about people and we separate ourselves from them based on the ideas we have constructed about people in our own minds. Community is built when people are honest and true and vulnerable with one another, and if I think you are going to judge me for my faults or my idiosyncrasies, then I’m less likely to want to be fully engaged in community with you. I think the main thing we can

efit from making the community a better place by feeling like they have a place here, are cared for, seen, and heard by others.”

The split assemblies that took place gave good examples of how students can improve the community as well. Mr. Davids, the Head of School, presented to the gentlemen the idea of being mindful of what they say, post, and do (especially to women), and Mr. Slings with Mrs. Benes presented to the ladies the idea of how social media can impact your life and that we

## The spooky question: Can Christians celebrate Halloween?

Do you believe in ghosts? The Celts, who lived 2,000 years ago in what is now the United Kingdom, did. They believed that on the night before their new year (October 31), the wall between the living and the dead fell, causing ghosts to walk the earth. The Celts thought such spirits would help them predict the future, so they wore costumes made from animals and attempted to tell each other’s fortunes (history.com). This festival, known as Samhain, evolved into our modern Halloween. No wonder that



Lucas Vander Woude  
Editor-in-Chief

Halloween is probably the most controversial holiday among Christians.

The Christians who boycott Halloween do have legitimate reasons. Though most Americans view it as a fun holiday involving candy and costumes, many people do not treat it as lightly. Halloween is the major holiday for practitioners of witchcraft, which includes the Wiccans. Wiccans channel what they call “psychic energy” through rituals. They believe that on Halloween night, the god Yule is sacrificed in order to ensure their well-being. And while you may think this religion involves few people, here are the facts: “In 1990, Trinity College in Connecticut estimated there were 8,000 adherents of Wicca. In 2008, the U.S. Census Bureau figure was 342,000” (“Why paganism and witchcraft are increasing,” NBC News). Witchcraft is definitely growing in popularity in America, and Christians should be aware of it.

On the other hand, Christians do celebrate other holidays that have their roots in pagan traditions. New Year’s celebrations are first recorded as pagan religious festivals in ancient Babylon, yet Christians celebrate that holiday. Even more striking is the Christmas holiday. We think of it as a Christian holiday, as we should. But many people do not realize that the holiday occurs in December and has many of its traditions like lighting candles, giving gifts, and feasting because early Christians co-opted Saturnalia, a pagan Roman holiday that celebrated the god Saturn. Some traditions, such as kissing beneath the mistletoe, connect directly to that holiday. Yet Christians celebrate Christmas and include such traditions without giving it a thought because we believe Christianity has redeemed a pagan celebration.

So can Christians celebrate Halloween? I think yes, but cautiously. Knocking on doors and receiving candy while dressed in a wholesome costume may be fine, but celebrating the spiritual side of the holiday is not. Drawing on the power of evil spirits or even celebrating their existence goes against what the Bible says because we are at war with these entities. In Ephesians 6:11-12 Paul says: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

So as you see kids rushing from door to door this Halloween, enjoy spending time with your neighbors and carving pumpkins. But keep in mind that for some people this holiday is not fun and games, so do not judge any Christians who don’t join in on the fun.

### the Echo

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Feature

Kelsee Smit

Arts

Giannia O’Neal-Schultz

Sports

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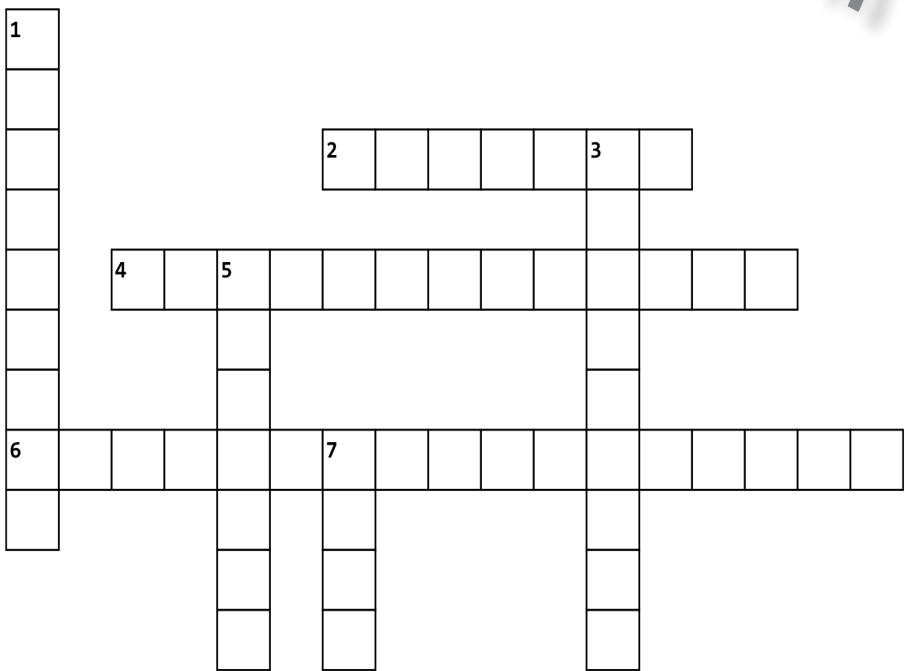
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Jeff DeVries

Editorials, unless otherwise stated, have been written by an editor and reflect the opinion of the majority of the Echo staff. Opinions expressed are not necessarily that of the administration, faculty, or student organizations.

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.

## October Echo Crossword



Across

Down

- 2. Spooky Celtic festival
- 4. Three-fourths for a musician
- 6. Place where you can get lost in a labyrinth

- 1. Student resource officers need this trait
- 3. Boys at Illiana should be men of \_\_\_\_
- 5. Spire Theme: God's Perfect \_\_\_\_
- 7. Heard in chapel and on the tennis court

The newspaper is a forum for expression; therefore, we encourage feedback or commentary. Please contact us at [illianaecho@gmail.com](mailto:illianaecho@gmail.com)