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# Reflections on the Holly Ball

BY ABIGAIL EDWARDS

Each December during the holiday season, the high school gathers for the Holly Ball, an exciting celebration during this incredibly special time of year. This yearly occasion represents the beginning of the holiday season and has grown into a beloved tradition. The students come together for an evening of dance and fun with our favorite people. The environment is full of excitement, laughter, beautiful formal dresses, and tuxedos.

The night is filled with anticipation, as we prepare for this amazing event. All are so excited to wear our fancy outfits, creating our hair and makeup, and looking our best. In addition, we will take photos before the dance with our friends and dates. The photos help create lifelong memories, and all of us display how eager we are regarding this special dance. The time prior creates a happy and exciting atmosphere for the fun evening ahead.



See REFLECTIONS ON THE HOLLY BALL, page 8

# Ring Ceremony Reflections

BY RILEY SCHMITZ

One of the most important traditions is our ring ceremony at Holy Names. As a Junior, I did not feel like an upper-classman until I receive an Academy of the Holy Names ring on my finger. However, this ceremony was not cemented in my mind by the ring itself, but rather the people I shared it with. The excellence of the tradition of a ring sister is a memory that will never be forgotten.



In my sophomore year, I was alumna, Stephanie Monroy's ring sister. We were on the tennis team together for many years, and one afternoon Stephanie ran out to the tennis court with candy and a sign to ask me to

be her ring sister. As her ring sister, it was one of the best moments of my sophomore year, from buying her favorite chocolate for her gift and having a hibachi dinner after the ceremony with other girls on the tennis team. I was so ecstatic that I could be a part of such a great evening

and that we had such an amazing experience.

The next year, I asked Stephanie the same question with a poster and Twix candy. Having Stephanie as my ring sister was bittersweet, as she was a senior, and I realized it would be one of the last experiences we had together as students at Holy Names. When the

See RING CEREMONY, page 8

# Senior Traditions

BY EMILY BELLINGER

Throughout the history of Holy Names there are many senior traditions such as, the senior sweatshirts, being able to leave during free periods, listening to music during gym class, senior service projects, and more. One of the newest senior traditions that began at AHN is the parking spot painting! This senior tradition of painting

parking spots are a fun way for graduating students to leave their mark on campus!

Typically, each student designs and paints their assigned parking spot to highlight their personality or commemorate their time at school. This tradition marks a rite of passage and serves as a lasting memory of their high school experience,



See SENIOR TRADITIONS page 8

# Holy Names Changed Me as a Person

BY MARGARET MCKENNA

When I transferred from a large public school to Holy Names in 7th grade, I did not expect such a profound change in my life. I was shy and unsure of myself as well. Throughout the years, my Holy Names school community helped me grow both academically and personally turning me into a more confident and outgoing person.



was different. The small size enabled me to quickly become close with everyone. Moreover, we became very close at a young age, allowing us to grow up and support each other. We motivated each other to do our best, and those friendships became the foundation of my confidence. These friendships helped me grow in ways I never expected, and have existed at our school throughout the years.

The most significant change is the friendships I formed at AHN. Coming from a large school, there were so many people that it was hard to really find a friend group, but at Holy Names everything

Academy of the Holy Names and its' supportive community helped me find my place. Everyone knows

See HOLY NAMES CHANGED ME... page 8

# Framing the Future

BY GIOVANNA BERMUDEZ

I was very excited for my senior pictures during my senior of high school! I planned my outfits for months in advance, and I knew these pictures were going to be an extension of me.

Ever since I was a little girl, I have loved having any excuse to dress up. Looking for the perfect outfit was definitely a challenge. I did not know

exactly what I was looking for, but I realized I would see it immediately. I remember shopping a few months prior and seeing the most beautiful white dress. I knew immediately that was what I was going to wear. I paired the dress with my favorite bow heels and added a bit of my personal style with my cowgirl boots. I decided to



See FRAMING THE FUTURE, page 9

## Wombmates: Life with My Twin Sister

BY ADDISON FOGARTY

A twin is frequently compared to having a built-in best friend, someone who has been with you throughout your entire life. This connection is much stronger for those of us who are identical twins, such as my sister Emma and me. Despite being separate, our experiences connect us in ways that influence who we are and how we model our lives. Emma and I are inseparable, where you find one of us, the other one is near, and we share a connection that exemplifies one of no other.

Emma and I have shared a room our whole life and will continue to do so. We are identical twins so we have shared a room from the time of even before birth and will continue in college as we continue our journey together. We are asked often, "What is it like to be a twin?" And truly I have never known how to answer that question because I do not know what my life would be like without Emma. I have been blessed with the opportunity that not many have, as being a twin is a blessing that no one understands unless they have one.

My friends suddenly find that we think alike to one another, an ability that friends and family find amazing and call "twin telepathy". People often marvel at Emma and my friendship. Many see it as only siblings, but we are much

more than that, we are each other's rock, partners in crime, and a source of relentless support through every twist and turn of life. We are forever grateful for the experiences we have been able to share and hope to continue these endeavors. Being identical twins has its own set of joys and difficulties.

Furthermore, there is an included circle of support that we share, even without having to speak, and we understand each other. We have a unique understanding of one another's



## The Beautiful Game

BY EMMA FOGARTY

I began playing soccer at the age of four. Since the day my foot touched a soccer ball and I put my first pair of cleats on, I knew it was right. At first, it was just a suggestion from my parents "We can sign you up for rec soccer in Waterford." My twin sister, Addison, and I signed up, my older brother, Connor, signed up for it too. At an early age, there are no positions, just playing, but as you begin to grow older, you develop a specific mindset for a certain position.

Growing up playing soccer, Addison and I always used to play in an age group above ours because of our size. Eventually, we stopped playing recreationally and switched to competitive soccer. When I was in third grade, my soccer journey truly began because I found my position on the field, as a goalkeeper. My brother was a goalkeeper at the time and my sister, and I were having disagreements on the field, so my mom suggested I try it. The first time I played goalkeeper was at practice, when I went to catch the ball, and injured my thumb in an odd way, yet I continued to play. Two hours later, I finished my practice, and my thumb still hurt, and the next morning when I woke up, it was bruised. I visited the doctor, and I had broken my thumb, and thought this position was

troubles and accomplishments. As twins we have learned to be strong in many ways. We have developed the ability to relentlessly defend one another while also supporting ourselves. We have been exceptionally good at this balancing act over the years, and it will help us as we face the challenges that are ahead. I am so appreciative of our special relationship as we move toward the next journey. ❁

See **THE BEAUTIFUL GAME**, page 9

# Summer in Italy

BY CIARA SEMENTILLI

I had an amazing opportunity to travel to these distinctive parts of Italy during the summer at the end of my sophomore year: Venice, Rome, Florence, and Positano. There are such incredible parts of Italy beyond the Vatican, the food, the beach, the boat, the hotel, or the flight there. Moreover, to experience life in a whole other country was incredible. I had a taste of everyday life in another country, and I spent two great weeks there. I traveled throughout the heart and soul of Italy, and I am excited to discuss my experiences from my own perspective.

I was amazed by the streets filled with water in Venice. Not a car was in sight, and transportation was solely by walking or by boat. Immediately, when I arrived at the airport, I knew I would love it. It was so different. The “taxi” drivers were prepared for the tourists, as they welcomed me on the boat with the brightest smile. I stepped onto the boat as they drove me to my hotel on the water and enjoyed my stay there. It felt as if I was stuck in time, and it went by far too quickly. It truly was a wonderful experience.

After Venice, I arrived in Rome. I appreciated the historic city, and I loved the fact that I was able to be in the center of the Italian peninsula. Everywhere you looked was something new, the Colosseum, cafes, gelato, fountains, pasta, The Chiara Hotel, and the museums.



I even wine tasted as well! My trip was not complete yet, as I arrived in Florence my favorite city of all time. It was uniquely beautiful including the hotel, the restaurants, the streets, the art museums, and the heart of Italy, the people. I arrived in a beautiful dress and had the opportunity to have my hair and makeup done so I could introduce myself to the mayor. Throughout the day, I had a photoshoot in the most unique areas throughout Florence.

To complete my trip, we traveled to Positano! The rest of my days consisted of eating, shopping, and tanning on the beach. We were also able to take a boat ride to the famous Mediterranean island of Capri. ❀

# The Charming & Dynamic City of Montreal

BY PATRICIA WHALEN

Montréal, a charming and dynamic city in Quebec, Canada, is known for its distinct combination of culture, adventure, and cuisine. Whether it's exploring renowned restaurants, historic sites, or museums, the city offers events and activities that everyone can enjoy. Over the course of my life, I have had the opportunity to visit Montréal with my family, and each trip provides unforgettable experiences.

As a child, my favorite part of visiting Montréal was tour-

ing the Biodome, a unique indoor facility that houses five different ecosystems. With its variety of wildlife, the Biodome educates about ecology and zoology by providing a first-hand view of animals and their environment. I loved simply observing the animals, especially the penguins in the Sub-Antarctic Islands ecosystem. The penguins waddling around and swimming in the water definitely makes for a playful and entertaining experience. Another highlight



was the Tropical Rainforest, which displays many exotic animals and plants including hundreds of colorful fish, frogs, and snakes. The exhibit is spectacular and immersive, almost making you forget the cold, Canadian weather outside.

Montréal is also well known for its culinary scene, consisting of many renowned restaurants, cafés, and bistros. My family's favorite restaurant was L'Entrecôte Saint-Jean, which unfortunately closed permanently. Although only offering

See **MONTREAL**, page 9

# Vacationing in Rhode Island

BY RYLEE APICELLI

A few times a year, I have the privilege of vacationing in the beautiful state of Rhode Island. Known for its scenic views and charming shops, Rhode Island is the perfect getaway. My favorite place to visit is the Newport area.



When I am there, I fill my schedule with activities such as sailing, shopping, and relaxing.

One of the best parts of my trip is always when we take our sailboat out on the water. There is something so refreshing about sailing across the waves with the wind in my hair and the sun shining down on me. The ocean is always a stunning shade of deep blue, and the breeze is almost always perfect for sailing. With the open waters stretching out before me, it is easy to feel stress-free and take in the beautiful scenery.

No trip to Rhode Island would be complete without visiting Newport: a coastal city known for its fascinating history and luxurious

shopping area. Every time I visit, I just have to head into town to browse the local shops. The streets of Newport are lined with pretty boutiques, yummy restaurants, old antique stores, and more. From

high-end brands to local shops, I always find something special to take home. After a long day of shopping, stopping for a delicious meal is always a must. Some of the best food in New England can be found in Newport, especially at Bowen's Wharf, which is filled with some of the area's best restaurants. My favorite item to order is a lobster roll from one of the local seafood shacks, and I highly recommend it.

Rhode Island is like a home away from home for me, and I love visiting for an escape from everyday life. Whether it is peacefully sailing the ocean or strolling along the streets of Newport, my trips to the Ocean State are always an amazing time. ❀



## Stories About Travel

BY AVA DENISCO

Traveling is very intriguing, and it is wonderful to see the world around us. The opportunity to experience the world around us is eye opening, and allows my family and I to become more cultural. There are so many amazing countries that I have visited, and I am grateful for this experience.

There are many different cultures that I have visited in South America and Europe, and there is one special country that I will discuss in this article. The country that I visited was Greece, and this vacation was truly one of the best experiences of my life. The rich culture behind Greece was incredible, and it was amazing to see the historic beauty. The opportunity to learn about the Acropolis was exhilarating, as well as being able to see the amazing history surrounding me. Meeting people from

Greece was interesting and reflective of their personalities.

The architecture on the islands was completely different from the United States and so unique. My favorite part of the trip was visiting the islands of Greece including Mykonos and Santorini. Mykonos was such a beautiful island, and the views were astounding, and the people there were so sweet. Throughout the island there were little towns and vineyards with amazing little trinkets purchased as gifts for people back at home.

Travel is one of my favorite things to do with my family and friends, and I love being able to see beautiful countries around the world. Traveling can help people learn about new cultures, help with personal growth, and connect with humankind. Experiencing the world is the perfect type of entertainment. ❀

## The Academy Courier Patrons

The Academy Courier would like to thank the following Academy Courier Winter 2025 issue Patrons for their interest and generous support:

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*\*The Courier Co-Editors and Staff work diligently and with enthusiasm to create an innovative, creative, and dynamic school newspaper here at Academy of the Holy Names.*



\*The Academy of the Holy Names Winter 2025 issue's goal is to create an excellent paper for the students and by the students.

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# Sports at Holy Names

BY MEARA SWEET

Academy of the Holy Names shows girls what it is like to be on a sports team. The sports teams at Holy Names are an amazing opportunity to become more involved within your school community and create long-lasting bonds of friendship.

I have many friends who play sports at Holy Names, and they all love it. Our teams are successful and good at communication and strategizing. Playing a sport builds on essential skills such as teamwork and discipline, as well as providing a way for you to exercise. At Holy Names I play tennis and lacrosse, and on these teams, I was able to learn many new skills and meet new people.

The coaches for these two teams are so encouraging and always motivate you to do your best. I began playing on the tennis team when I was in eighth grade and the lacrosse team when I was in ninth grade.

I joined the lacrosse team freshman year, so I could have something to do, but I started to play more, and it inspired me to join a club team which helped me get better.

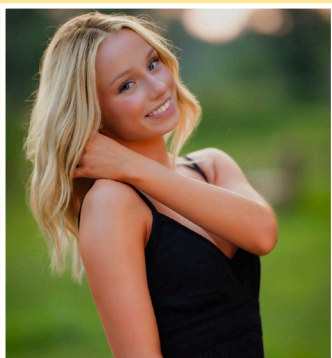
I love the sport because of the Holy Names lacrosse program and the coaches.

When you try out for the teams at Holy Names the coaches make a huge effort to get to know each girl. They always do their best to help you make the best decisions. Partaking in a sport encourages you to branch out of your comfort zone and create new experiences and memories. Even if you try out for fun you could really love the sport, and make it a bigger part of your life beyond school. ❀



## College Stress

BY AISLINN LEWIS



The senior year brings the weight of college applications, as a time filled with both excitement and stress. Students begin this integral process by researching schools, trying to find the right balance between academic programs, campus, and location. As the list of potential colleges decreases it is challenging to find a college that is the right fit for you.

The application process is a lengthy and overwhelming journey. Writing personal statements, acquiring recommendation letters, and meeting deadlines becomes a balancing act. Many students find the essays to be the most challenging component, as they try to express their unique stories and ambitions within a limited word count. The student

feels the pressure to stand out among thousands of applicants.

Once the applications are submitted, the waiting process begins. Each email received is a mix of hope and anxiety, as students wonder when or if their hard work will pay off. Still, there are senior year activities and social events to enjoy, but the uncertainty about the future is still uncertain.

As the acceptance letters finally begin rolling in, there is a combination of relief and excitement. After months of stress, the demanding work feels impressive, and students can finally breathe. Hearing back from their top-choice schools marks the beginning of a new chapter for a student that is full of possibilities and new challenges ahead. ❀

## Balance

BY MYA WAITERS

Having a life outside of school is integral for staying balanced and healthy. It helps me manage stress, build useful skills, and grow as a person.

One way I stay balanced is through competitive dance. Dance keeps me active and lets me be

creative, but it also teaches me discipline, focus, and time management. Balancing dance practice with schoolwork can be challenging, but it does help me stay organized and fluid. Also, being part of a team has taught me how to work well with others and be an effective communicator.

Another way I stay balanced is by playing Varsity Lacrosse. Lacrosse keeps me in shape and

gives me a break from the pressures of school. Also, it helps me build strong friendships with my teammates, and the team atmosphere is a great way to relieve stress. Having people to rely on in sports makes school feel less overwhelming and more supportive.

I also have a part-time job, which has taught me responsibility and independence. Balancing work with school and activities has



See **BALANCE**, page 8

# Reflections on the Holly Ball

From Page 1

Once we arrive there, we see everyone from our high school between grades nine through twelve. We view everyone's beautiful attire and lovely hairstyles. It is great to see our teachers at the Holly Ball to greet us as well. Moreover, we all find our seats with our friends and walk around and mingle as we wait for our delicious meals. Once the music begins everyone is so excited to enter the dance floor and dance with everyone. The energy is so high, and laughter as well as smiles fill the room with a dynamic vibe.



Eventually, the night ends, and everyone is sad. We have waited so long for this moment, and it is over quickly, yet we are so happy with our wonderful memories. The evening captures the spirit of our school combined as one sisterhood. Holly Ball is an Academy of the Holy Names' tradition that we will reflect upon for years to come. ❀

# Ring Ceremony

From Page 1

evening arrived, she made an elaborate box full of pictures of us throughout the years and a bracelet tying back to an inside joke we had when we were in middle school. As Stephanie begins her first year at Michigan University and I reach the end of my time at Holy Names, our memories are wonderful.

This year, a junior on the tennis team, Mary Burke, asked me to be her ring sister. I am so happy that I was a part of the ring ceremony of another close friend. The Holy Names ring ceremony demonstrates the sisterhood that I have found here in every aspect. ❀

# Senior Traditions

From Page 2

creating a tangible connection to their time at school. This tradition takes place before the school year begins and kicks off the senior year with a fun summer day with friends making it a memorable day. The parking lot is brightened with color and artwork, and it serves as a fun reminder of high school years for future students.

layer of paint is applied. After applying the first layer of primer the paint can be applied to the parking spot and designs and colors begin to display.

This fun day begins with arriving around 9 AM to prepare the parking spot. Students blow off any dirt or leaves from the spot to begin with a clean area, and then the first

After a long day and many work hours, the designs are completed on the parking spot. After a bit of reflection one is rewarded with viewing a piece of art that is representative of the individual student. ❀

# Balance

From Page 7

taught me how to manage my time better and how to communicate effectively with others. It also gives me the chance to save money, which is productive and great.

In conclusion, having a life out-

side of school allows me to become a well-rounded person. Through dance, lacrosse, and my job, I learn important skills that help me stay organized and manage school stress better. ❀

# Holy Names Changed Me...

From Page 2

each other, and there is a real sense of connection with a senior class of 48. The school taught me the importance of being there for others and acceptance in return whether it is working together on projects or just sharing a moment of laughter. Every piece of confidence derives from the root of the strong friendships made at AHN.

As graduation approaches, I feel a combination of gratitude and sadness. I am grateful for the friendships, lessons, and growth I have experienced here, but I am sad to leave the community that helped me grow. I am thankful for the lessons I have learned that will stay with me, as I move forward into the next chapter of my life. ❀



# Framing the Future

From Page 2

take my pictures at Congress Park, in Saratoga. This unique location created the most perfect background filled with beautiful flowers and fountains.

I believe these pictures mark a very important time in our lives and are memories that will be cherished forever. The seniors value the memories and friends we make throughout the year, and we also receive a keepsake. Our school photographer, Kevin has an amazing talent for capturing the

perfect shot and creating a special experience during such an important time in our lives.

These photos represent the our high school experience as we prepare for a new chapter in our lives. These images reflect the growth and path that we have taken on our journey. These photographs highlight not only endings, but new beginnings that frame the future for our lives to come. ❀

## The Beautiful Game

From Page 3

not for me. After recovering from my thumb injury, I began playing again. I was training two or three times a week with a goalkeeper trainer, and I fell in love with the sport all over again. My brother, who is three years older, was my true inspiration for the position, and he was incredible as he worked diligently to become a well-trained goalkeeper. After he graduated from high school, he stopped playing, but I still think how I enjoyed his talent. I continued to play competitively, as I began my high school career starting my rocky Junior career. I finished my senior season, and I am proud of the team and everything we have accomplished with this season. In terms of Addison and my soccer journey, we are dedicated to play-

ing soccer in college, together.

Over the summer, Addison and I visited Russell Sage College, and we enjoyed their athletic and academic programs, and we committed that same day. Although I am excited to start my new journey at Russell Sage, I am extremely grateful for everything that my club and school teams have given me. I have so many great memories of playing soccer, and I am ecstatic to continue these memories in my new chapter. Playing goalkeeper has been an outlet for me with the difficult moments throughout my life. After college, I plan to continue playing soccer, less competitively. This sport has profoundly changed my life, and I strongly encourage everyone to play a sport

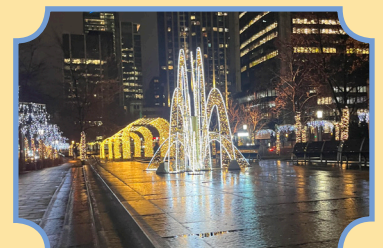
because it allows you to meet new people and create bonds that will last a lifetime.

I would like to dedicate this article to Coach Christine Cochrane who profoundly changed my life and my goalkeeping career. She gave me a chance as a young person playing with a team of girls three and four years older than me and, I will be forever thankful. She coached me at NY Elite, and I dedicate this article to her memory, as she sadly passed away in November of 2024. I am so thankful for Coach Christine as well as Tom Rogan and the impact they both made on my soccer career. ❀

## Montreal

From Page 4

one menu item, steak frites, this restaurant stood out for its excellent food and atmosphere. Another favorite was Universel Déjeuners et Grillades, which had an impressive breakfast menu. Its wide variety of options, including ten different kinds of eggs benedict, ensures that there is something for everyone. Each and every dish my family tried was delicious, making it one of the most highly anticipated aspects of revisiting Montréal.



Montréal offers an unforgettable experience to all who visit from lively entertainment to delicious cuisine. ❀