

Photo by Jeff DeVries

Principal Peter Boonstra works at his desk on Thursday, May 16, a mere three weeks before vacating that seat for Illiana's new principal, Mr. Brent Vermeulen.

Bye, Bye, Boonstra

Illiana's principal Peter Boonstra retires after 24 years of service to school

Isabella Girolimon
Reporter

After serving for twenty-four years as principal at Illiana, Mr. Boonstra will retire. In his tenure, he has made a difference to both the school and the lives of students and faculty members.

"He has such a calling for Christian education," said Mr. Lance Davids, Illiana's Head of School. "He has a deep love for it, and that's great. He puts his heart and soul into this place. He's always here late because he loves it so much."

Davids added that Boonstra was "a great empowerer of people. He never got in the weeds and asked a lot of questions. He would always just say, 'Go for it!'"

"Mr. Boonstra led the school well through some difficult times and transition," said Mrs. Rachel Drost, who has worked over the years as a faculty member for Mr. Boonstra and as an administrator beside him. "I'm thinking of moving to this new campus, of coming back to school through the pandemic. Those were not easy things to hold everybody together

through, but he has been able to keep the community united and headed in the same direction towards Jesus."

Drost also said that Boonstra is a selfless soul, always willing to put the needs of others before his own.

"He serves selflessly," Drost said. "He is always willing to do the things that nobody else wants to do, or even knows needs to be done, and he does it humbly and without complaint, and without expecting recognition or appreciation. He has always supported me and encouraged me, and personally, I am very thankful for that. He has been a great mentor."

Davids added, "He was not only a great colleague, but a friend."

Future Illiana students gather for bonfire, outdoor activities

Kenadie Piepenbrink
Reporter

Beautiful blue skies and warm weather greeted incoming 8th grade students who gathered for the second annual 8th-grade bonfire on Friday, May 10.

Illiana invited 8th-grade students from partner schools for a night of fel-

lowship and fun in order to get students excited about beginning their high school journey here. All currently enrolled freshmen were invited too. A total of 115 students showed up to participate in the fun.

Having the bonfire gave incoming students a chance to meet other incoming students from different schools. Some of the fun

activities included roasting s'mores and playing spikeball, bags, football, and other games. Most of the events happened in the courtyard.

Mrs. Jenna Dutton, Director of Admissions, said, "This was just a night for students to come and hang-out and meet their classmates for the next school year."

Q&A with Mr. Boonstra

Q: You've been involved in education for about four decades. In what ways has education changed since you started? In what ways does it seem unchanged? What changes leave you feeling the most satisfied?

A: The biggest change has been in technology. This has transformed education. In 1984 I used a Commodore 64 to make birthday banners using a tractor-feed printer. In 1987 we took a bold step in putting an Apple computer in every classroom. In 1990 I called someone on a big bag phone while riding in a car! Today, almost everyone has a camera, a computer, a radio, a library, a compass, a catalog, a TV and a telephone in their pocket! And we just call it a "phone". . . . Our radical experiment through COVID of jumping into remote learning proved, I think, that there is something fundamental and essential about the in-person exchange of a teacher with his or her students. This was even more dramatic in grade schools than in high schools. That experiment affirmed that classrooms are still more effective learning centers than networks.. Another big change in education is that we are open about many things that we used to hide or ignore. In a way, 40 years ago we began discovering that some seemingly wholesome practices had a darkside that has now been exposed. Bullying is being addressed. Child abuse has been exposed. And we are making progress in understanding mental illness. And along these same lines has been a departure from entirely punitive and painful discipline to a more respectful nurturing and guiding.

Q: What have been the best parts of working at Illiana?

A: That list is long. The Illiana community as a whole has a very high regard for authority and respect for leadership. And this community, the Illiana community, has a tenacious and persistent commitment to Christian schooling and to Illiana in particular. It is not just loyalty, but is more like identity and ownership. That commitment brought me here 24 years ago and it endures today. It has been a delight to guide Illiana through radical change that also maintained our mission and vision. The most dramatic change has been our facility. There's been tremendous reward and satisfaction in imagining a completely new space, building that space in all its detail, and then making it all serve the community so well. I have also delighted in just watching the Lord lavish his blessings on Illiana. We have been blessed by great teachers-teachers with a deep sense of calling to this school and this community. We have been blessed with an army of volunteers from board members to coffee servers. I have delighted to see some tremendous scholars going on to make a difference. We are blessed with an inspiring and impressive campus and visionary donors who have stepped up over and over again. Just like children are a blessing to a family, growing enrollment is a blessing to a school! Praise the Lord! The progress has been slow and fraught with some setbacks, but I've enjoyed participating in some progress in expanding the tent, increasing diversity, maybe increasing in appreciation of various people instead of fearing the different. We have nothing to fear and God wants us to congregate, not segregate.

Q: What from Illiana will you miss when you're gone?

A: I'll miss the kids, of course. I like kids and Illiana kids in particular. Most of Illiana's kids have been a delight. Eager, respectful, studious, inquisitive. The bunch that chaperoned me to Uganda last month, for example, were rock stars of faith and fun. And what I'll miss the most, I think, is rubbing shoulders pulling on the same rope in the same direction with people who love Jesus and are passionate about raising up the next generation to do the same but more. I'll miss the camaraderie of my unit.

Finally time to go: some reflections on quick-moving high school life

It's that time of year when I write my final column, turn in my final test, and say my final goodbyes. My freshman self would've never thought this day would come.

Freshman year I thought I would have never taken off that mask and that would have become a part of my high school career.



Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

But here we are four years later and it has been a blast. From the countless soccer games, basketball Loud Crowds, track meets, and Praise Crowd to being a part of chapel committee, homecoming court, and the Ugandan mission team, I can confidently say I just about did it all. (I did, however, stay away from singing and instruments for the good of mankind.)

Through all those activities, trips, and teams I have met so many amazing people who I could just go on and on about. To keep it short and sweet, thank you, everyone. I wouldn't be the person writing this today without the things I have learned over the past four years.

To parents of students, I know teenagers are moody and not always fun but you make a difference and we may not say it often or at all, but we love you and thank you for all you do and give.

To teachers and staff, thank you for all you do and for putting up with the many weird and crazy things thrown your way. Whether you know it or not, you have made a difference in our lives even if you do not admit it.

To incoming or current students, I leave you with this advice: get involved and have fun. Before you know it, your time will come to walk across the stage and say goodbye to people you have known your entire life, but don't be scared. Graduation is not an ending, but an invitation to the next adventure. Keep working hard and never lose faith.

Now finally to my fellow seniors, we have come so far, some of us have been together since pre-k and some have joined along the way. But no matter where you have come from or where you will go, I am grateful to be able to graduate with you all. Some of us may meet again and for some this may be the final goodbye, but no matter what, I hope you each go off to do great things and never forget your faith.

It has been an amazing journey and it will be sad to say goodbye but that time comes for everyone and now it is our time to go. I leave you with this: 1 Timothy 4:12 says, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." To all people, but seniors especially, let what you have learned show in all you do, wherever you go, to whomever you meet.



Photo courtesy of HR Imaging
A group of Illiana boys clad in white jump up and down to the music during the Prom dance. Underclassmen were allowed to attend the dance.

Prom gathers under stars

Joy Ramsey
Reporter

Illiana's juniors and seniors gathered for prom on May 11 at the Halls of St. George in Schererville. The theme

of this year's dance was Under the Stars.

Junior Olivia Klomp, a member of the prom committee, said, "We talked over many different themes and under the

Illiana's wrestling coach teaches middle school camp

Reese Jansma
Reporter

In an attempt to grow its program, Illiana's wrestling team offered a middle school wrestling camp on May 13, 15 and 18.

Wrestling coach David DeBoer said, "We did as much as we could to promote it. We sent it out on social media, and we had it sent

to the grade schools."

DeBoer said such a camp was instrumental to how his own interest in wrestling grew. He said, "It's how I got introduced to the sport, and it turned into a really big deal for me. I ended up wrestling at Illiana and in college and now coaching, so just getting exposure to the sport [is important]. It's a really good way for them to get a small

dose of it rather than going to a club team."

DeBoer added that he hopes to add a club team and to promote wrestling teams for Highland Christian School and Crown Point Christian School, both of which plan to start middle school wrestling teams.

DeBoer pointed out that whatever students might learn

about wrestling before attending Illiana will only make the Viking team stronger as athletes will already know the rudiments of the sport, a fact that DeBoer said "really is a big deal."

DeBoer added, "We've had a lot of feedback from girls who are interested because they've seen the girls team grow. I'm excited to see the outcome."

DeBoer said, "I think a lot of students focused more on the things they did after the dance rather than staying for the whole thing." Students went to a variety of activities including going bowling, going out for desserts, and going to bonfires.



Photo by Rachel Drost
Junior Cameron Schutt and sophomore Daniel Dylstra team up at the Praise Crowd bags tournament on May 17.

Praise Crowd sponsors bean bag tournament, night of praise

Cheyenne DeJong
Reporter

The Praise Crowd Committee pulled off the Bean Bag Tournament on Friday, May 17, despite being unable to host due to a lack of student interest last year. This free event for students provided hot dogs and hamburgers as well as entertainment and fellowship.

A beautiful evening allowed for ten teams to socialize and compete together before returning inside for Praise Crowd worship. Some team names were Hawaiian Punch, Feet, Anime, and the Aloha

Brothers.

This event used to draw in many more people years ago, so the Praise Crowd committee continues to explore ways to increase their number of attendees, find a way to advertise to more people, and raise more money to improve the experience.

"I love building community," said faculty sponsor Rachel Drost, "so any time we can get students together to hang out, whether it's playing or singing praise songs, that's a good thing. This event does that."

As a first-time bean bag tour-

namment host, sponsor Craig Slings said, "I am looking forward to so many things. The costumes are fabulous. I love bean bags and of course, I love the worship, especially when people get into it. Community translates into worship and worship takes this to a whole new level. It really adds that exclamation point at the end."

"I love all the different people being able to come together and play a game," said senior Kelsee Smit. "Even though it's the end of the year, it is great that we still are able to organize events to do with each other."

Band students visit theme park in Ohio

Abigail DeBlock
Reporter

57 Illiana curricular band students performed at two local schools and then took a quick trip to Sandusky, Ohio beginning on Friday, May 17, and arriving home late on Saturday, May 18.

They started the trip by going to Calvin Christian and Lansing Christian to give performances to the middle schoolers. After that, they headed to the Kalahari Waterpark Resort. They were originally scheduled to perform at a church in Ohio on Saturday morning, but the church had to cancel at the last minute. So, they spent the day at Cedar Point Amusement Park and headed home later that evening.

The Illiana curricular band includes students from Wind Ensemble, Instrument Ensemble, and Symphonic Band. Senior Wind Ensemble member, Heidi Gorter, said she enjoyed the trip because "it was a good chance to connect with people" she doesn't always get to hang out with. She also said she enjoyed performing for the grade school students, spending the day at the water park and Cedar Point, and the bus rides.

Illiana holds schoolwide picnic on soccer field, sells food to students

Gabriella Costello

Reporter

Illiana students enjoyed the annual spring picnic on Thursday, May 2. Students were allowed to bring their own grills, food, coolers, lawn chairs, blankets, and games. For those who chose not to bring their own, the school provided a \$3 lunch consisting of a hot dog, pop, and chips.

Large groups of students brought blankets and food to share. Some include candy to make a candy salad, fruit, pastries, and drinks. Two groups of students brought their own grill and meat for hamburgers.

“We decided the night

before to do the grill idea. We ran to the store to pick up the meat and anything extra needed,” said sophomore Nick DeBlock.

A large number of the junior and senior guys played football or catch. Some of the girls were hitting the volleyball back and forth in a circle. While others played spike-ball.

The morning of the picnic induced a scare with a rainy downburst around 8:30, but when lunch rolled around it was clear blue skies and the temperature was continuously rising, leading to a beautiful day.

The lunch period was extended about 25 minutes beyond normal.



Photo by Jeff DeVries

During the picnic, a group of senior girls takes a break from eating to smile for the camera. The picnic was held on Illiana's soccer field, and live music was played on the speakers.

Agricultural science students bring May flowers to Illiana's courtyard



Photo by Jeff DeVries

These purple flowers add a splash of color to the perennial flower beds that adorn Illiana's courtyard.

Ellie Ratliff

Reporter

Our courtyard is looking different this spring thanks to our science teacher, Mr. Brian Sylvester, and his Agricultural Science class. The students gathered in groups and designed perennial flower beds to add some color to the blank space. This was a new project for the class which allowed them to get out of the classroom to learn and experiment. The students studied shade tolerance, growing habits and size, cold-weather tolerance, and bloom time. Sylvester took elements from all the student designs and combined them into a master plan. Students then went to work to bring the plan to life, enriching soil, planting flowers, and mulching.

They planted Coral Bells, Hosta 'Brother Stefan,' Plumbago and lots of others to accomplish their main goal of adding some color.

They wanted to plant flowers that would all bloom and provide color at different times throughout the year and come back the following year, so the class chose perennial flowers. Perennials are plants that come back every year to bloom while annuals only last for a single season. The gardens are also designed to require low maintenance.

Sylvester said, “We thought it might be a great project for agricultural science to add some color.”

Junior Jaylee Hanks said, “I had fun working with my partner Jenna Koontz, and the flowers are really pretty.”

New Chicago mission trip planned for summer, attracts nine Illiana students

Kaelyn Yonkman

Reporter

This summer will be the first year that Illiana does a Chicago Mission Trip. The mission trip will be run through the Dream Center in Chicago, a non-profit organization that's mission is “reaching and restoring lost and hurting people in the Chicagoland area as well as

in our nation.” According to Ms. Sara Johnson, any students going on the trip will be helping out with whatever the Dream Center asks of them.

The Dream Center has 3 main programs that Johnson said they'll be helping with. First, the Rose of Sharon, which helps victims of prostitution and trafficking. Second, the Army of Kind-

ness, which is a thrift store. Third, they're helping with the Manna house, which is a food pantry. Students on the trip will be staying at the Dream Center while they serve.

Johnson said she's wanted to do a Chicago mission trip for a very long time. In fact, the first mission trip she ever went on was to Chicago. She said that she was

raised to serve and to help others, but you should “fix your backyard first,” meaning that there's hurt and need close to the Illiana area that might go unnoticed. She said helping in other states or countries is important, but it's harder to continue checking up on the people there. She said with a Chicago mission trip, she's able to go and revisit the people

she helps even after the mission trip ends.

She said she also wanted to keep mission trips affordable for students, and Chicago is cost effective. She said she never wants money to be a reason someone can't come on a mission trip.

The trip is June 10-June 14, and nine students are going, chaperoned by Mrs. Cruz and Ms. Johnson.

Illiana science department to offer new aquaponics course for next school year

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

Arts and Leisure Editor

Illiana's Science Department is offering a new course that will include aquaponics for the 2024-2025 school year.

Aquaponics is an extension of hydroponics. Biology teacher Brian Sylvester explained, “While hydroponics uses water with dissolved nutrients in place of soil to

grow plants, aquaponics uses bacteria to convert fish waste into nutrients plants can absorb out of the water. The bacteria and plants together remove the toxic fish waste from the water and return clean water back to the fish. Aquaponics provides both plants and fish as food sources.”

This class will be taught by Sylvester, but multiple teachers and students will

have a hand in assembling this class. Dr. Jim Kuipers and Sylvester are developing the curriculum and mechanical components of the systems. Mr. Ty Hillemonds and Mr. Joshua Gabrielse will be developing the data collection systems.

Aquaponics will be taught in the new Integrated Science course which will include topics such as environmental science, meteorol-

ogy, nutrition, and agriculture science.

Sylvester said, “The integrated science course, including aquaponics, is recommended for students that are interested in learning a broader range of topics geared towards helping students become better stewards of Creation.”

Sylvester added, “Since aquaponics is an extension of hydroponics it seemed

reasonable to make the jump. Dr. Kuipers originally got the ball rolling.” Sylvester, however, “wanted nothing to do with it unless it was in someone else's room.”

Since some very generous donors liked the idea, they made it possible to start the project in a second shipping container which will be placed behind the school next to the shipping container that holds the hydroponics arrays.

Alcohol abuse no laughing matter

If you see something, then say something

Lydia O'Riley
Sports Editor

Sometimes, the hardest decision a person can make is helping a friend who denies there is anything wrong. If one suspects a friend is abusing alcohol, one needs to speak with the friend to address it.

School counselor Neil Zandstra said, "You need to confront them lovingly, and without judgment... You need to talk to them one on one, in person, and I wouldn't recommend talking about them (your con-

Zandstra added, "You think you might be doing them a favor by keeping it a secret, but if you know of somebody who can help them, you have to let them know." Not speaking up when a friend is in need can do more harm than good, which is why it is so important for an adult to know what is going on. Even though other people can see someone is in need of help, it doesn't mean they can see the problem themselves.

The website for the American Addiction Centers suggests that when a person with a

alcohol so they can receive the help that they need.

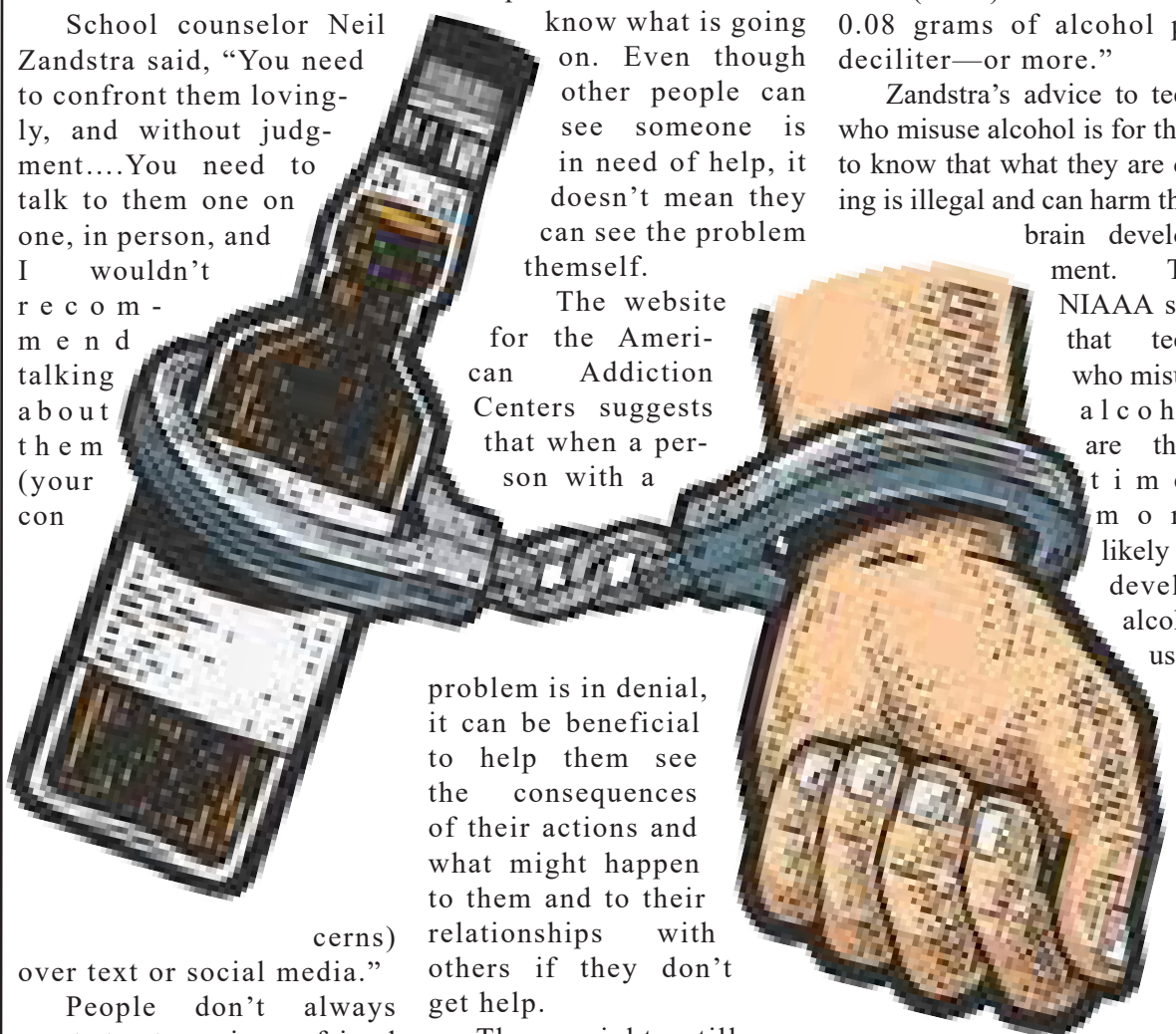
Zandstra explained how he has seen many teens binge drink, which according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) is, "a pattern of drinking that brings blood alcohol concentration (BAC) to 0.08%—or 0.08 grams of alcohol per deciliter—or more."

Zandstra's advice to teens who misuse alcohol is for them to know that what they are doing is illegal and can harm their brain development. The NIAAA said that teens who misuse alcohol are three times more likely to develop alcohol use

problem is in denial, it can be beneficial to help them see the consequences of their actions and what might happen to them and to their relationships with others if they don't get help.

They might still refuse to get help, but this is when, as Zandstra puts it, "you may need to take it out of their hands." He explained that someone may need to talk to the parents of the student who is using

disorders than people who start drinking at the age of 21. In helping such students, he would try to find out how frequently and how much they drink and then get them the help they need.



cerns) over text or social media."

People don't always want to turn in a friend for a problem they suspect because they fear their friendship could be ruined. However, most of the time, turning in a friend can be the most beneficial thing for them.

1 in 12 male and 1 in 25 female adults in U.S. have an alcohol use disorder

Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

Alcohol abuse is nothing new, but it is something that can often be swept under the rug.

The problem causes serious problems though. According to Talbott Recovery's article "Alcoholism Statistic You Need to Know," 29% of the traffic fatalities in 2018 were the result of alcohol-impaired driving. 10,511 people that

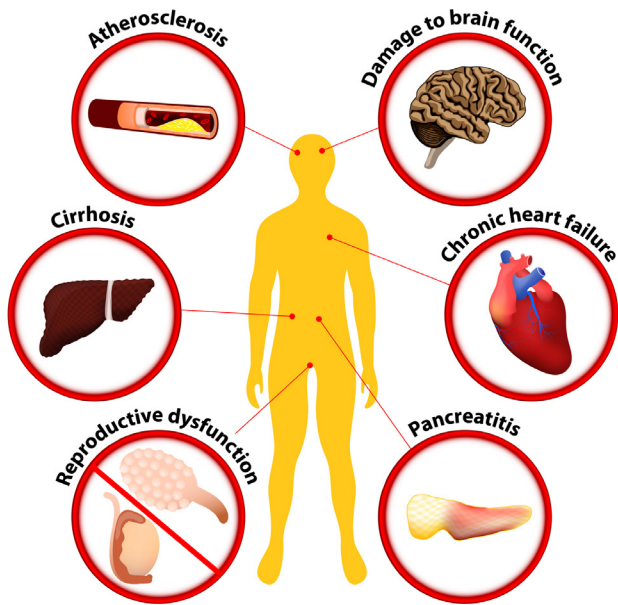
year died in traffic wrecks because of drunk drivers.

Not only is the problem serious in consequences. It is also widespread. The same article says that around 15 million people struggle with an alcohol use disorder in the United States, but less than 10% of them receive treatment. More than 65 million Americans reported binge drinking in the past month, which is more than 40% of the total of current alcohol users.

The problem affects teens too. Teen alcohol use kills 4,700 people each year. That's more than all illegal drugs combined.

The reported numbers are even higher in a 2022 report from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism which says that 29.5 million people age 12 and older had alcohol misuse order. Statistics in the report show that the condition affects teens and adults, men and women, and people of all races.

ALCOHOLISM



Courtesy of Recovery at the Crossroads website

Alcohol abuse can have a negative effect on a large number of the body's organs.

How to spot symptoms of having problem with drinking

Kelsee Smit
Feature Editor

Alcoholism is defined as the inability to control drinking due to both a physical and emotional dependence on alcohol.

Alcohol abuse occurs everywhere—in churches, schools, jobs, and families. Alcohol abuse can affect people from all different walks of life, but to be able to overcome it people must be able to recognize the signs in themselves or others.

The Mayo Clinic says on its website, "Symptoms [of alcohol abuse] include a strong need or urge to use alcohol. Those with alcohol use disorder may have problems controlling their drinking, continue to use alcohol even when it causes problems, or have withdrawal symptoms when they rapidly decrease or stop drinking."

The website also lists a set of signs and symptoms that show a person is at risk. The list includes the following:

- Being unable to limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- Wanting to cut down on how much you drink or making unsuccessful attempts to do so
- Spending a lot of time drinking, getting alco-

hol or recovering from alcohol use

- Feeling a strong craving or urge to drink alcohol
- Failing to fulfill major obligations at work, school or home due to repeated alcohol use
- Continuing to drink alcohol even though you know it's causing physical, social, work or relationship problems
- Giving up or reducing social and work activities and hobbies to use alcohol
- Using alcohol in situations where it's not safe, such as when driving or swimming
- Developing a tolerance to alcohol so you need more to feel its effect or you have a reduced effect from the same amount

The list of symptoms is a long one and getting familiar with how to recognize signs of alcoholism and alcohol abuse could save a life.

Mayo Clinic suggests that "If a pattern of drinking results in repeated significant distress and problems functioning in daily life, a person likely has alcohol use disorder. It can range from mild to severe. However, even a mild disorder can escalate and lead to serious problems, so early treatment is important."

Illiana Jazz Night Swings



Illiana Jazz band plays "St. Louis Blues" at the concert on May 2.

Photo from Lucas VanderWoude

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

Illiana hosted the second Jazz Night on Thursday, May 2, which was the final performance of Illiana's Jazz and Jazz Select Bands.

The event offered refreshments for all those attending, which included freshly made Italian sodas and various salty and sweet snacks. There was also a student VIP lounge located on the balcony, which required tickets for entry and had separate refreshments for the students. Rachel Monroe, the band director, explained this unique setup: "I always want to see more students come out to music events, and this lounge gives them a place to sit away from their parents." The atmosphere was also very different from other Illiana concerts, as the attendees were encouraged to move around and talk during the performance.

In addition to Illiana's Jazz Band and Jazz Select group, three professional musicians performed at the concert: pianist Rob-

ert Monroe, guitarist Jake Scampini, and drummer Darius Peterson. Robert Monroe is the husband of Rachel Monroe and is a freelance musician in Chicago, Jake Scampini is a friend of the Monroes and plays at their church, and Darius Peterson is a friend of Robert Monroe and plays in a touring group with him.

At the end of the evening, Rachel Monroe awarded the Louis Armstrong Jazz Award to Heidi Gorter, a senior who plays french horn for Jazz Band and keyboard for Jazz Select. Heidi plans to be involved in Dordt University's music program, but says that she will miss Jazz Band because of "the atmosphere and being able to improvise."

The attendees found the concert very enjoyable. "It's a lot of fun to listen to songs that I used to play," said Elliot VanDerGriend, a senior at Illiana and former member of Jazz Band who attended the concert.

Monroe said that she decided to host Jazz Night because "it's good to have a relaxed, non-formal music event."

Justine Olson Competes to Sing in Washington DC

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

Senior Justine Olson competed against hundreds of high school students at Valparaiso University on April 27 for the Classical Singer Magazine vocal competition. She scored a 4 out of 5 on her vocal performance of "Alleluia" by Mozart, which moves her into the final round of the competition taking place on May 24-27 in Washington DC. If Justine wins the competition, she will have the opportunity to win music scholarships.

The classical singer competition has many age divisions and music genres. Olson is in a division with only high school students.

Olson was introduced to this competition by her vocal lessons teacher Bradford Thompson. He is a professor at Valparaiso University where Olson will attend college. Olson thought the experience would be fun for her as well as a great way to practice auditioning. She

also said, "The feedback you get from the judges is really helpful, especially if you want to get into musical things later on in life. They really help build your self-esteem as well, especially your vocal abilities too."

Thompson told her to sing a song she knew, so she chose "Alleluia" because she performed it for ISSMA. Olson prepared this song for months with Illiana Christian's choir teacher, Kathy Sliemers, who helped her practice for ISSMA. She also practiced the song with Professor Bradford, and she would listen to the song going to and from school on repeat.

Olson said, "There's so many notes in just a couple of measures, and it's really hard since my vocal cords aren't fully developed yet, and this competition is more for women in their twenties. The more you apply yourself, I always tell myself, the better it goes. Practice makes permanent, so that's how I get it memorized."

Olson will be driving to Washington DC on May

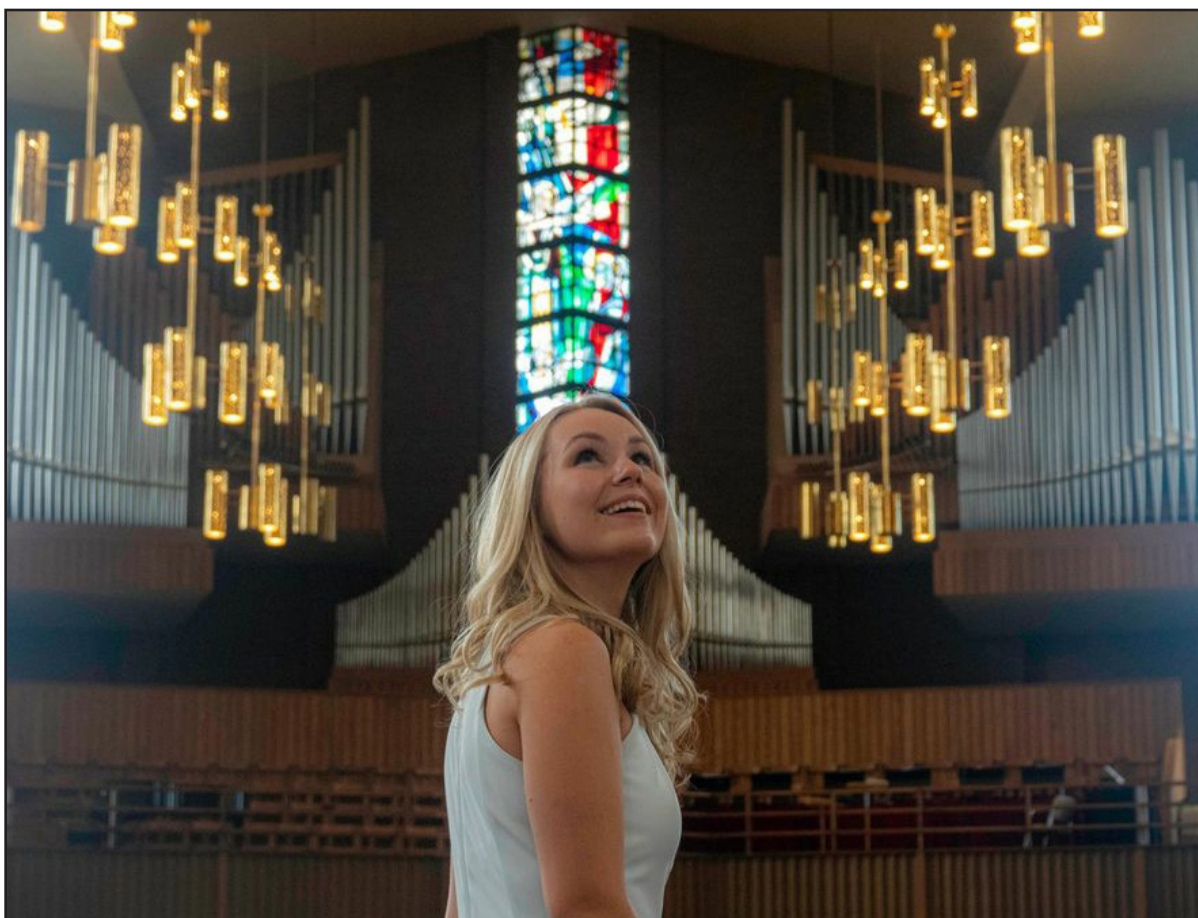


Photo Courtesy of Illiana Christian Instagram

Senior Justine Olson takes in the beauty of the Chapel of Resurrection at Valparaiso University where the first round of competition for Classical Singer Magazine was on April. 27.

24. On the 25th, 26th, and 27th for the competition and a convention sponsored by the magazine. In the morning, participants will sing in different rounds of the com-

petition, and the remainder of the day will have master classes, opportunities to meet with recruiters from various universities and programs, and exhibitions

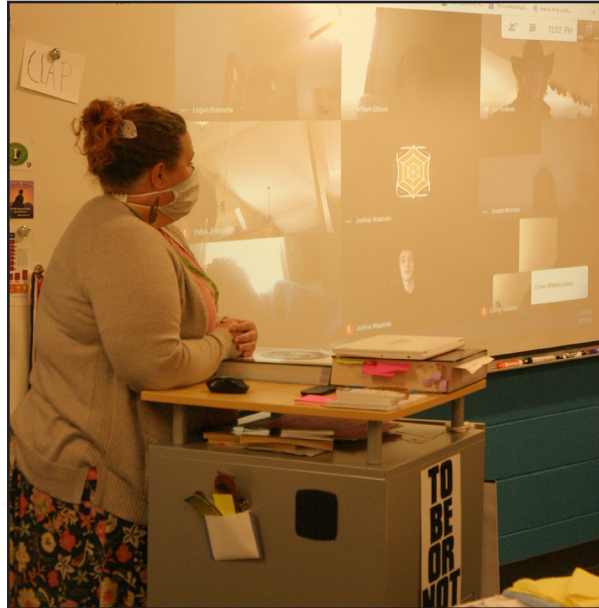
to browse.

Olson said, "It's kind of like my shopping spree; it's like the mall for me, but a music mall, and I'm really excited."

Senior Favorites...

Freshman year memories

- Cheesing people during Home-room lunch
- Hunger games for science class and being chased down by Mr. Sylvester
- Two different chapels with everyone seated far apart
- Having to eat lunch in our homerooms everyday instead of A & B lunch
- Having a Big Brother and Big sister time where we had to meet with a upperclassmen and talk with them about school
- Watching the dodgeball tournaments in "sky boxes" aka classrooms
- Wearing masks then getting a detentions if we took off our masks
- Having to spray and wipe the desks down after every class
- Having to get our temperature taken at the doors everyday when we walked in
- Cheyenne tackling some guy playing football at Avery Olthof's house
- Elearning and having to quarantine if we were exposed
- Slip and slide during the cookout
- Owen Bandstra doing backflips in the back of the classroom in Digital apps
- The lines and arrows in the hallways to direct people how to walk
- The girls soccer game against Covenant when we were down by 2 and then came back to win was a lot of fun



Sophomore year memories

- Boys soccer team going to the Regional finals
- Mr. DeVries seeing me without a mask and asking me to put my hand over my face to figure out who I was
- Max Meter as Vector for dress up days and in chapel
- Wearing customs and doing the polar plunge in the rain
- Watching Mr. Haan's snake eat a rat
- Baseball team winning state



Chapel skit/ speaker/ memory

- When Ryan and Trent had the new shoes and they had weird funny names for them
- Nolan throwing bags of trash out of Isaac's car window
- Chase Docter was playing Simon Peter and fell over
- The rap at the end of the last chapel sophomore year
- When we talked about integrity
- Mary Hulst
- Mr. Dykstra
- When the chapel speaker threw Hi-C at us.
- Every Chapel sophomore year about Godify
- Liv Aje dressed up as Heve Starvey for Family Feud games
- Heidi Gorter's grandpa speaking in chapel
- When we played Kahoot and seniors won
- The lieZ dector - featuring Zander Weemhoff



Junior year memories

- Being able to take Creative Writing
- Honors Physics with Kuips
- The releasing of a goat in the soccer field
- Attending the Close Up trip to Washington DC
- Helping be a part of the creation of the Spire
- Going Christmas caroling with chambers in Chicago and meeting a member of Pentatonix
- Baseball team winning state
- The parking lot flooding
- Right to Life March; there was nice weather and the bus ride there was good



Fashion trend during high school

- Definitely the hobo/not hobo look.
- Otherwise just the comfy leggings clothes.
- When tee shirts on top of long sleeves came back for a month or two
- Flannels
- Dressing in a suit
- Graphic tees
- Simon wore jeans one day, and Janna freaked out
- Baggy jeans
- Claw clips
- Boot cut / bell bottom jeans and leggings
- Cargo pants
- Mom jeans, high tops, and crochet tops/shirts!!!
- Pajamas
- Flare jeans
- Crochet clothing
- FLOWY pants
- Hawaiian shirts
- Ultra mini Uggs
- Skinny jeans

Senior year memories

- Doing the Senior Sunrise
- Christmas Rizz
- Winning the spirit flag
- Taking AP classes and exams
- Going all over the place with people in between school and play/musical rehearsal
- Mr. Veldman saying good morning on class trip
- Carson landing on his head after trying to backflip in the middle of class.
- Being on homecoming court
- Track Michigan meet
- Gym classes
- Basketball, being on court, senior trip,
- Doing the hustle in "Alice in Wonderland"
- Gym classes



Movie that came out during high school

- Top Gun Maverick
- The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes
- Five Nights at Freddy's
- Spider-Man: No Way Home
- Cocaine Bear
- Barbie
- Oppenheimer
- Bullet Train
- Spiderman Into the Spiderverse
- Silent Night
- Dune 2
- Grey Man
- Little Mermaid



Senior Favorites...

Memory from a class

- Learning that the Queen died before German class
- In Senior English Mr DeVries always managed to make a class period interesting.
- Alex Tambrini claimed that raisins grow on trees.
- Helping Miss Top with “track stuff” during study hall
- Every time Mr. DeVries would ask a question I wouldn’t completely understand and I proceeded with an answer so wrong that even he found it funny.
- Luke Jania doing presentations in German class
- Mr DeVries’s 6th period class 2nd semester
- AP Chem has been a lot of fun
- Junior year in Acapella Choir writing notes of encouragement for the seniors
- Working for Mr. DeBoer with Tim Prim 6th period.
- Mrs Lagerwey’s Bible 4 class as a whole
- Watching March Madness in honors history junior year without Mr. White noticing
- every single advanced gym class
- Hamburger Sized Pocket Watch
- Everything in Honors Physics
- Mr. Veldman in basically every class
- *ALMOST* every day in Advanced English
- All the Local History Field Trips
- Business Management field trip
- Everything that happened in Physics
- Herr Fennema calling out Luke Jania’s presentation
- Watching “Cinderella Man”
- all discussions in Advanced Literature
- Conversations in Advanced Art
- Laughing with bayleigh in Mr Sylvester’s class
- Mr. DeVries explaining to Lucas what to do when a character seduces a woman
- Playing catch phrases in Spanish 3
- When Mr.Gorter asked if Robert needed a hug.

Go Day memories: We came, we saw, we served

- Painting the drama storage unit white
- Working at the thrift store and taking pictures with baby dolls with Sherwood
- Going to Ms. Johnson’s church and getting to play with an adorable stray puppy while cleaning the thrift shop there
- When Landon got scared of the goats at Navarro Farm
- When Mrs. Teach’s homeroom went to Crown Point Christian
- Carmelite Monastery
- Going to clean up an old Catholic Church with a nunnery attached to help it become an outreach program
- Riding in the bed of a truck with leaves and the whole homeroom
- riding on a golf cart and seeing peacocks at Mira’s grandparents’ house
- Going to Wampum Lake, finding a message in a bottle while cleaning up there
- Going to the dunes
- Helping at Highland Christian with math, and telling a kid that $7 + 20$ was 13
- Hiking trails
- Working at Second Life
- Dog shelter, walking the dogs
- Riding in a truck bed with my homeroom to go dump leaves
- Cleaning this food pantry and there was this dog that came by us
- It was pouring down rain and we were rushing and picking a whole bunch of tomatoes at Navarro Farms



Favorite school events of the Class of '24



- Every Loud Crowd
- Fine Arts Recital
- Dress-up days
- School Cookouts
- Class trip
- All the musicals and plays
- The Colorado trip
- Music car wash
- Dodgeball Tournament
- Sadie’s Dance
- Snow days
- Student council Easter egg hunt
- Close Up
- state for baseball
- Praise Crowds
- Polar Plunge
- Electives
- Bean Bag Tournaments
- Right to Life March
- Local History field trips
- Club time



Loud Crowd games

- Junior year playing at Hanover in double OT and we stormed the court when we won
- All the homecoming games were definitely my favorite
- When we played Chicago Christian
- Hawaiian night
- Christmas 2024 against River Forest
- Junior and senior homecoming games
- The one where my friend hit a car
- Blackout
- Homecoming sophomore year
- Sophomore year's Illiana vs Chicago Christian game
- Illiana vs Chicago Christian 2022
- Pink out
- USA night
- Bikers vs. Surfers

Class trip memories

- Bus games with the boys
- Mary Beth being the bus tour guide
- Getting ice cream with Veldman
- Playing card games on the bus.
- The bus ride
- Hotel games with Mr. Veldman
- Enjoying time with friends walking around DC
- Meeting Congressman Frank MrVan
- Jose rizzing up Mr. Davids and Mr. Veldman
- Kamhuis and De Vries's song about going into the closet and sucking eggs
- Chase singing "Pinball Wizard"
- Being a history nerd for my friends
- Going to Mount Vernon and singing songs while walking up the hill
- Mr. Veldman in general
- Messing with Isaac Sherwood
- Putting food in Zach's mouth as he was sleeping
- Renting scooters
- Shopping at TJ Maxx,
- Eating at the pizza place, shopping
- Seeing the White House
- Calling each other on the hotel phones
- Walking around Old Town Alexandria
- Getting lost for 3 hours on the

- Subway to Chinatown,
- Witnessing an eight-year old rapping on the streets of Chinatown
- Surfing in the subway
- We were all on the bus, and it was pretty quiet. All of a sudden, Justine yells, "Oh my goodness, guys! Tony Stark just died!" (She had seen a post about Endgame.) We gave her no end of grief after that.
- Going to Arlington Cemetery
- Walking up hills at Mount Vernon singing "Give me Jesus"
- Lauralynn getting lost in the cemetery and her trying to find her way back before the bus left



Song to represent our high school years

- Return of the Mack by Mark Morrison
- Northern Downpour by Panic! At the Disco
- Learning to Fly by Pink Floyd
- Alright by Darius Rucker
- Overcomer by Mandisa
- Living on a Prayer by Bon Jovi
- Piano Man by Billy Joel
- Heather by Conan Gray
- Good Old Days by Macklemore
- Crazy Train by Ozzy Osbourne
- Let it Be by the Beatles
- Runnin' Down a Dream by Tom Petty
- How to Train Your Dragon soundtrack
- I Will Always Love You by Whitney Houston
- Turi ip ip ip by Electro-light
- I'll Always Remember You by Hannah Montana
- More Than a Feeling by Boston
- Count on Me by Bruno Mars
- We're All In This Together by High School Musical Cast

Volleyball season cut short after second round of sectionals. record 20-12

Kelsee Smit

Feature Editor

Boys volleyball finished the season with an overall record of 20-12 and a conference record of 20-8. Their season closed after the second round of sectionals when the Vikings dropped 2 out of 3 sets against Andean.

Some of the highlights of their season included going to Indy and spending the night, winning the Munster Tournament, and going to Top Golf for a fun outing.

Junior Shawn Kramer said, "The season went all right. I liked how we played but it was a rough ending. The team was all pretty close and it was a good time. I think we lost because it was just a bad game. We weren't playing smart and



Photo by Jill Rozendal
Senior Gise Gibson and junior Josh Bultema jump up to block a volleyball at game against Bishop Knoll on March 19. The team won 3-1.

serving."

Senior Hunter DeYoung said, "The season was a big learning experience, especially growing and getting used to playing and spending lots of time with each other. We gelled very well throughout the season. Our season was cut short but our team fought tough till the end. The team was one of the best teams, and they have a ton of potential for next year."

Kramer added, "I think we will have a strong front row next year with blocks and kills. Our setting will have to get where we want it, but everything else will fall into place."

Persevering through bad weather, tennis team smashes competition, makes it into sectional finals

Lydia O'Riley

Sports Editor

The Illiana tennis team is continuing to smash the competition with a 16-2 record.

The team competed in the first round of sectionals on May 15 and advanced to the second round on May 17 held at Munster High School.

The team placed first in conference, but lost their advancement into regionals during the final round of sectionals where they played against a stronger Munster team.

The team have made several improvements this season, one being in their doubles teams.

Senior Avery Olthof said, "We switched some people around and now we are a lot stronger. For singles we've been consistent, but now we are getting stronger at finishing the point."

As for difficulties, the team has had to cancel and reschedule many matches because of the weather. Olthof added, "We got rained out a lot, so it's hard to reschedule, especially when it is a conference match."

The tennis team has played larger schools including Crown Point and Chesterton, which has been a chal-



Photo by Jim Kamphuis

Sophomore Sienna Eenigenburg swings to hit the tennis ball.

lenging part of the season. Olthof said, "Those are really hard teams to beat, so I think just those matches as a whole were challenging, but it's also exciting to see how close we came to beating Crown Point."

The best part of being on

the tennis team this season, according to Olthof, is "meeting so many friends who like to play tennis, and all the girls are super nice. They love to play tennis, and they really want to get better which is helpful when the whole team wants to get better."

Golf team grows together spiritually with team devotions and prayer, other teams notice

Lucas VanderWoude

Editor-in-Chief

The Illiana boys golf team has continued to dominate the competition with a record of 11-1 as it reaches the end of the regular season.

The team played its last match of the regular season at Munster High School on May 22, and if the team makes sectionals, it will play at Lake Central High School's home course on May 31.

The teams' biggest contributing factor to its winning record is the depth of its roster.

"We have 8-9 guys who can shoot at a varsity level," said Isaac Sherwood, a senior and a team captain. "We have one of the deepest teams around here in terms of how many players we have who can switch from

junior varsity to varsity."

Even with the team's almost perfect record, there is still room for improvement. "I feel like we can get more consistent with our top four scores," said Sherwood. "We have times when our scores go up into the 90s, and if we could stay in the low 80s consistently that would be good."

The team has also grown spiritually over the course of the season. While on the road to every tournament, the team holds devotions, usually on the topic of mental toughness. In addition, the team also prays before every match and tournament.

"We don't necessarily make sure that all the schools can see us, but they can definitely see us, and we're very intentional about our prayer," said Sherwood.



Photo by Jack Rudenga

Senior Isaac Sherwood looks to see where his golf ball landed after swinging at match against River Forest and North Newton on April. 30.



Viking sports briefs



Boys track athletes race to sectionals

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

The Illiana boys track team placed second in the sectional meet, advancing to the regionals competition. There have been many goals this season that the team hopes to accomplish, through their core covenants which are discipline, servanthood, and character.

Junior Divine Olikagu said, "My goals this season have been to run faster in my event, which is the 300 meter hurdles and beat

the school record with a time of 36 seconds."

Freshman Justin Jackson said, "My goal has been to improve on my speed and endurance and beat my personal record in the 100 meter dash."

There have been many highlights this track season, including placing 2nd at sectionals and being the best person they can be on and off the track.

Olikagu said, "The biggest highlight of the season is growing closer with my teammates and forming new connections with people."

Ranked 1st in Conference, softball team sets its sights on Andean in Sectionals

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

Illiana's softball team ranks number one in the Greater South Shore Conference with a record of 10-0. There have been many improvements this season like more team chemistry and bonding.

Junior Adeline Mulder said, "Throughout the season we have really improved on coming together as a team. We have really been working on base running and learning to adjust to different pitchers as they come."

Senior Libby Kreykes said, "The longer we have played in the season, you get to know the players around you and what they can cover. We also improved a lot on our communication."



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Senior Libby Kreykes gets the pitch from the dugout against Boone Grove on April 10.

There are many goals that the team hopes to accomplish. Their biggest goal is to make it to the state championship and to play to the best of their abilities.

Junior Lydia VanderWoude said, "My personal goal is to steal the most bases. A team goal is to grow together as a team and go downstate."

Mulder said, "My goal is to be more aggressive defensively and beat Andean to move forward."

There have been many highlights of this season. Kreykes said a highlight of the season is everyone being really encouraging and nice, adding that the team really bonded over pickleball and Just Dance.



Photo by Jeff DeVries
Sophomore Spencer Bandstra slides into home at game against Calumet High School on April 9.

Illiana baseball team is eager to win another state title

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz
Arts and Leisure Editor

Illiana's Varsity Baseball team ranks number one in the Greater South Shore Conference with a record of 8-1. The team has played well all year and is eager for a chance to take a shot at another state title.

Junior Tobey DeVries said, "As a team we have learned to work together and accomplish goals big-

ger than ourselves."

Junior Gavin Meyer, the team's main pitcher, said, "Over the course of this year we have become more of a unit. We have had our ups and downs but we have come together as a whole to fix it."

There are many goals that the team wants to accomplish this year like winning the state championship for the third time in a row and continuing to play well together as a team.

Senior Aaron Gouwens said, "Some goals we have is to grow together, create a bond we didn't have before the season, grow to be better men, and win the state title again."

DeVries said, "The biggest goal this season is to learn how to love each other. Our coaches really emphasize bringing Christ on to the baseball field and lifting each other up as well as the teams we are playing against."

Girls track team qualifies to regionals, Ella Olthof sets new school records

Lydia O'Riley
Sports Editor

Girls track has continued to do well through the regular season. On May 14 the girls competed at the sectional tournament at Highland High School and placed 3rd out of 10 teams.

Many girls advanced to regionals including, Audra Davids, Ella Olthof, Alexa Mercuri, Abbie Ritzema, Jori Davids, Dani Dodge,

Cadence Kinsley, Sam Bultema, Hannah Bruinsma, Jaden Poortinga, Maisy Vroom, Ellie Ratliff, and Gabriella Costello. The regional meet is planned to be on May 21.

At the sectionals Junior Ella Olthof broke two school records that she set her sophomore year. She set a new 1600m run record with a time of 5:18.10. In the 3200m, Olthof ran a time of 11:29.68. On break-

ing these records, Olthof said breaking the records "is fun because you're kind of racing against yourself and seeing your improvements."

This season seems to have gone well for the Illiana girls track team. Olthof said, "It's [the season] been cool. A lot of people have been setting PRs or school records. I feel like this year everyone has been doing a lot better."

Athlete of the Month

May's female athlete of the month is not just one person; it is a whole team. Illiana has only one softball team this year with fifteen girls.

Varsity softball coach Nicole Wondaal said, "Our entire team has been incredible this season! We haven't had one star shining more brightly than any other. Instead, we have 15 players that are truly remarkable. Each person accepts and excels in their role on this team. Each person shows true Mudita (selfless joy) for her teammates. This group carries each other and loves each other on and off the field. Our team core values are Mindset, Fight, and Ownership. This group displays all 3 core values each and every day. I have LOVED every minute coaching this group and consider these kids and coaches to be amongst God's greatest blessings to me."



Editorial

Peer pressure: when is it good, when is it bad, and who does it affect?

Have you ever felt peer pressure? We on the Echo staff know that you have (as have we) because, well, we're all human beings. Humans are social creatures, and it almost feels wrong to not go along with what the majority is saying or doing. While this is not inherently bad in and of itself, peer pressure can have many negative effects on people, and even the most independent and self-assured person can fall victim to peer pressure.

A formal study called the Asch study was conducted in the 1950s to determine how susceptible people were to peer pressure. One participant, the one being tested, was placed in a room with seven other people who were actually part of the experiment. All eight people were all given two cards: one with a single line on it, and one that had three lines on it labeled A, B, and C. They were then told to match the line on the first card with one of the

lines on the second card. The line on the first card clearly matched one of the lines on the second card, but the seven participants were instructed to give the same wrong answer on

one of the ways to do that is by having good friends. While bad friends can inflict negative peer pressure (pressure to do the wrong thing), good friends can cause positive peer pres-

in a majority, then you are putting pressure on the minority to follow the group. What we laugh at, what we cheer, what we say, how we act--all these things encourage others to do the same. With this in mind, it is important not only to surround yourself with people who make wise decisions, but also to make wise decisions independently.

Finally, as the year comes to a close we want to give a challenge to the seniors concerning peer pressure. As you go out into the world, be aware that not everyone will be a good influence and make wise decisions. It is up to you to make sure that positive peer pressure is working in your life. Be vigilant and on the lookout for friends who will pressure you into making the right decisions. Also, remember that people are watching you and being pressured by your actions. We on the Echo staff hope that this year's seniors will be a shining example for what God's kingdom is truly like.

Another thing to keep in mind about peer pressure is that it is not just something that affects you.



purpose. All of them gave their answer, and then the subject of the experiment was instructed to give his or her answer. The study found that 75% of participants conformed at least once over the course of 12 trials.

This study is quite revealing, but how does it apply to Illiana? While it may be true that Illiana is not a controlled experiment, peer pressure is real. We cannot avoid it. We can, however, use it to our advantage, and

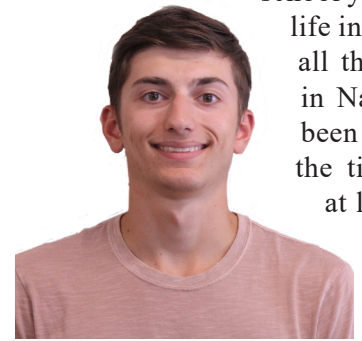
sure. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:33, "Do not be deceived: Bad company ruins good morals." The converse is also true. When you are surrounded by people who make wise decisions, then it feels out of place to make a foolish decision.

Another thing to keep in mind about peer pressure is that it is not just something that affects you. Other people are affected by peer pressure, and you might be contributing to that! If you are

Time to move on: Looking ahead to next chapter of my life

In the last sentence of the last book of the Chronicles of Narnia, The Last Battle, C.S. Lewis writes something that resonates with me when

I look back on my high school years: "All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at least they were



Lucas Vander Woude
Editor-in-Chief

beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which

goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before."

Let me be clear: I do not think that after high school, my life is going to get progressively better and better until I die. I will undoubtedly have some rough patches and my life will backslide, but that's how life is. What I know is that my life has barely started. All of my years in elementary school, middle school, and high school have been just the title page, and my "actual" life is about to start. I'm not saying that my childhood and adolescence wasn't important; quite the contrary. Most of what I have learned and been exposed to will probably stay with me for the rest of my life; however, there is so much more that I have to learn and experience.

The reason why high school is such a pivotal time in our lives is because it is a search for identity. Up until this point, we have been either not thinking about who we really are or basing our identities on people we like or our parents. This still happens in high school, but for the most part high school is a major identity crisis for everyone as they try to figure out who they really are and what their future holds. This was definitely how my freshman year went, as I had very few friends coming into Illiana and had no idea who I was going to be and what friend group I would belong to, if any. Fortunately, I found who I truly was in junior and senior year as I began to be involved in more activities and found true and lasting friendships.

When I look ahead to college, some words from Tom Petty come to mind: It's time to move on, it's time to get going; What lies ahead I have no way of knowing. I have an inkling of what might happen to me at college, but it's just that--- an inkling. All I can do is trust that God will bless me as much as he blessed me in my high school years. The title page has been fun, but I am ready to move on to the first chapter of my adult life.

As I closed my last column, I would like to say how much I have enjoyed writing for the Echo. Writing these columns have made me realize invaluable things about myself, and I would like to thank all of the readers for being supportive of my work.

the
Echo)))

Editor-in-chief

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News

Feature

Kelsee Smit

Arts

Giannia O'Neal-Schultz

Sports

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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.

The Echo Staff hopes that you have a great summer!)))



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