Project PRIDE cleanup reaches 20 years

Annual CAVA event has grown to a nationwide campaign against hunger and homelessness

By Rob Antecki
Times Writer

Project PRIDE, Aquinas’ 20th annual hunger cleanup will be April 17 in the Heartside district of Grand Rapids. During the event, Aquinas college students join Heartside residents to clean up the neighborhood and get to know each other. The cleanup is organized each year by the student organization Community Action Volunteers of Aquinas. Last year’s event drew approximately 150 volunteers.

The focus of Project Pride is to increase awareness of the problems facing some neighborhoods in Grand Rapids and to get people involved with local organizations such as Heartside ministry and the Heartside neighborhood association. Students, faculty, and staff join families and residents of the Heartside District to pick up trash, sweep, rake, and clean up the area. The participants are divided into teams. Participants also gain the opportunity to meet residents of the area and learn about their lives. “It’s a really fun bonding experience and an opportunity to meet new people,” said Elissa Sangalli, CAVA coordinator. For some, the cleanup is an introduction to the problems that are faced by the Heartside district. For others, it is a continuation of their involvement with organizations devoted to the area’s plight.

According to CAVA advisor Eric Bridge, the event goes further than simply cleaning up the area. “It’s also about the relationships that are built, about getting to know people, interacting, sharing our life, and listening to people’s stories and some of the challenges they face,” Bridge said.

The annual hunger cleanup has its origins at Aquinas College. Working with nine other local colleges, Aquinas raised about $10,000 in 1984. In the 20 years since, it has become one of the largest community service cleanup events nationwide.

“Aquinas students who have graduated have taken the idea and done it in other cities around the US,” said Sangalli. According to the National Student Campaign against Hunger and Homelessness, 125,000 people have volunteered with the program since its inception, raising over $1.5 million to benefit organizations helping the homeless and hungry.

The event is funded at Aquinas College by CAVA, allocations from the student senate, and campus ministry. Local businesses also sponsor the cleanup and help defray the costs of free t-shirts and food. There is also some collaboration with the city sanitation department, although most of the project involves students, Heartside residents and businesses.

“The Pride Heartside cleanup illustrates that Aquinas plays an integral role within the Grand Rapids community. Aquinas students, faculty and staff work hand in hand with Heartside residents to improve the downtown neighborhood and share in each other’s lives,” said Bridge.

Because of last year’s school budget crunch, CAVA received a lower allocation from the student senate to put toward the project, but according to Sangalli, the organization has applied for grants and received money from organizations outside of the school, as well as worked to reduce expenditures.

Sign up for the hunger cleanup is April 6 and 7. Volunteers will meet at the Moose Café at Aquinas College at 8:30 am and will return about 1:00 pm after lunch. Both breakfast and lunch are provided at the event.

For more information about the cleanup or to participate, contact CAVA coordinator Elissa Sangalli at 632-1101.
Let me drink...legally

For your next column write about why the drinking age should be lowered," my roommate said one night after examining the permanent ‘M’ marked on her hands from a concert, clearly indicating that she was a minor. My first thought on the topic was that the drinking age is a complex issue and I wondered if I really wanted to write about a topic that’s already been talked about so much in today’s society.

But, instead, I looked into it nonetheless. Obviously, I, like many college students, would be very happy if I could drink legally at the age of 18. Think of the holidays, the spring breaks, sporting events, Tuesday nights, Wednesday nights, Thursday nights...you get the idea. Effectively, the end of the MIP for college students—what student could argue with that?

Then there’s also the other typical student argument: at 18, the age of majority, when students are allowed to make almost every other decision regarding their life, they still can’t legally drink for another three years. How much sense does that make?

About 80 percent of college students drink, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, and students at small colleges drink more on a weekly basis than those at large colleges. The subject of lowering the drinking age clearly affects Aquinas.

Further looking into the topic, I expected to find a mountain of research showing what a bad idea increasing the drinking age to 21 has reduced these risks. However, if colleges and universities want to ensure diversity on campus in order to provide a richer educational experience for all students, affirmative action programs, are required to consider race as one of many factors in considering applications. In a landmark case, the Supreme Court declared University of Michigan’s undergraduate policy unconstitutional because it granted 20 out of 150 points to an applicant based on his or her race. The Supreme Court felt that too much weight was being placed on race in this instance, and if of had to review its admissions policies.

Ingrid Scott-Weekly spoke at Aquinas last week on the topic of affirmative action in higher education.

March 24, 2004

Local leader speaks on affirmative action

By Katie Jensen
Times Writer

"Affirmative action simply opens the door—it doesn't do your study for you." These are the words of Ingrid Scott-Weekly, Director of Equal Opportunity for the City of Grand Rapids. Scott-Weekly spoke at Aquinas on the topic of affirmative action on Monday, March 15.

She began her presentation with a definition of affirmative action. She defined it as "a results-oriented or remedial tool used to promote diversity, primarily in the areas of education and business." She continued with the legal standards for affirmative action according to the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the 14th Amendment.

According to Scott-Weekly, there are two necessary factors that an affirmative action program must provide. The program must serve a "compelling interest," and it must have new definitions. To meet these criteria, institutions must prove the existence of discrimination using statistical data. Then, they must limit the number of minorities that will benefit from affirmative action based on these statistics.

Scott-Weekly particularly discussed the affirmative action policies in colleges and universities. Most of these educational institutions use a "diversity rationale" to support their affirmative action programs.

The reasoning behind this rationale is that universities want to ensure diversity on campus in order to provide a richer educational experience for all students.

However, should a university and colleges want to use affirmative action programs, they are required to consider race as one of many factors in considering applications.

In a landmark case, the Supreme Court declared University of Michigan’s undergraduate policy unconstitutional because it granted 20 out of 150 points to an applicant based on his or her race. The Supreme Court felt that too much weight was being placed on race in this instance, and if of had to review its admissions policies.

Ingrid Scott-Weekly also noted that affirmative action cannot continue indefinitely. It is defined as a remedial tool, meaning that it must eventually end once that remedy is achieved. But for now, Scott-Weekly believes that affirmative action is important. She also believes that students at universities benefit from a more diverse campus, and affirmative action helps educational institutions to meet that goal.

March 24, 2004

Campus Safety Dispatch Log

On 03/22/04 @ 3:43 p.m. A suspicious person was reported in the Acme Building. Officer responded and could not locate the individual.

On 03/20/04 @ 11:54 a.m. A resident reported toothpaste smeared on doors in Regina Hall.

On 03/19/04 @ 10:57 a.m. Officers approached a vehicle in the Mayfield lot for suspicion of marijuana use.

On 03/15/04 @ 9:30 p.m. Campus Safety was notified of a person going into the Beckman Building. Officers responded and could not locate the individual.

On 03/14/04 @ 12:12 a.m. A tree fell and damaged a vehicle in the Wege Lot.

On 03/02/04 @ 4:40 a.m. Campus safety was notified of a male sleeping in a Reginal Hall lounge. Officer responded and broke up a 4:33 a.m. situation in the dorm.

On 03/02/04 @ 3:38 a.m. Officers discovered three bicycles broken into in the Mayfield Lot. GRPD was notified and assisted in cleanup.
House kills death penalty proposal

By Jameel Naqvi
Michigan Daily (U. Michigan)

(U-WIRE)ANN ARBOR, Mich. - A proposal that would give Michigan voters the choice to amend the state constitution to allow the death penalty in cases of first-degree murder failed in the Legislature March 18. The measure fell short of the two-thirds supermajority required for the legislation to pass to the state Senate.

State Reps. Larry Julian (R-Kalamazoo) and Alexander Lipsey (R-Kalamazoo), who stood on opposite sides of the issue, characterized the two-and-a-half hour debate the issue, said he was disappointed. "I knew it was going to be a hard battle," Julian said. "It's tough to get two-thirds (support)."

"I thought the House had changed. Term limits had brought in some different representatives," Julian added.

Disappointment aside, he expressed his faith in the same constitutional principle that contributed to the failure of his proposal.

"If it should take a supermajority to change the Constitution," he said. "We shouldn't be able to amend it every day."

Lipsey agreed with Julian that the House vote closely mirrored divisions in the electorate. "It's probably true that we represented our constituents down the line," he said. But he added, "I believe if the population of Michigan gave serious thought to the issue, they would reject it."

Lipsey questioned the claim that a referendum is sheltered from the influence of the Legislature. "When the legislature puts something on the ballot, it's more of a recommendation than a question," he said. He added that a referendum exerts undue influence on voters and goes against the principle of representative democracy. "The legislature's paid to make policy decisions and they should."

Julian defended his proposal as democratic, but Lipsey and other opponents of the amendment have said supporters of efforts to rescind Michigan's 158-year ban on executions can bring the amendment to a statewide vote if they collect enough signatures.

Lipsey said the proposal's defeat would silence supporters in the state legislature for the time being. "I don't think it's an issue that's going to come up again soon," he said.

By Carol Marley
March 24, 2004

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A bit of Irish fun with 'Slainte Mhath'

Aquinas' St. Patrick's Day Party 2004

You meet the most interesting characters in English classes.

Name: Alice
Residence: Wonderland (or thereabouts)
Age: "Neither too old nor too young"
Most memorable experience: "The time I went down the rabbit hole."
Quote: "Curiouser and curiouser."

For more information about becoming an English major, or earning a minor in literature, writing or journalism, visit the English department web page at \http://www.aquinas.edu/english or call extension 2829

Calendar of Events

Thursday March 25
Student Council for the Exceptional Child Charity Auction, 7:00 pm, Wege Ballroom

Friday March 26
Outstanding Aquinas Women Awards Reception, 12:30-1:30, Holmdene Board Room

Sunday March 28
Campus Ministry Service Learning Youth Rally

Monday March 29
World Affairs Council Great Decisions Foreign Policy Lecture Series; "Media and Public Policy," Vicki O'Hara, 7:00, Performing Arts Center, $5

Thursday March 25
AQ Times Benefit Concert, 5:30 pm-12:00 am, Wege Ballroom, $3

Monday April 5
Jane Hibbard Idena Women's Studies Center 2004 Resourceful Women Conference, 10:00 am, Janicki Center

Student senate elects officers

The student senate met in full assembly on St. Patrick's Day, March 17 in the Wege Ballroom. For several members this was their last meeting as officers.

Elissa Sangalli will replace Luke Overtmime as the new chair. Brooke Murphy will succeed Tim Schultz as vice-chair and Hillary Adkins will replace secretary Briana Amsun. Elections were held Thursday March 18 and Friday March 19. All three new officers ran unopposed in the election.

Students were reminded of the college's NCA accreditation open meeting on March 23. The senate service project was also discussed. They will read to children at Congregational Elementary School on March 24 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am for National Literacy Month.

The new chair, vice-chair and secretary will preside over the next meeting which will be held on Wednesday March 31 at 3:00 pm.

Violence in Haiti affects AQ

Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was ousted from office Feb. 29 after a large rebel uprising in the country. The rebellion started Feb. 5 after rebels killed several police officers and set buildings on fire. Aristide fled to the Central African Republic with the help of the U.S. and later joined his family in Jamaica.

American, Canadian, Chilean and French troops are currently in Haiti to help restore order so relief organizations can deliver supplies. A United Nations force is scheduled to arrive in the country by May.

The violence has also affected Aquinas; the college has a yearly service learning trip for students to Haiti and also has a partnership with the Andre Pierre Trade School in the city of Bords.

Aquinas raises money to sponsor seven teachers at the Andre Pierre school each year. As of early March, the school was still able to hold classes. The school has over 200 students.

During the Haiti service learning trip, Aquinas students help with many tasks at both the school and a nearby hospital, ranging from building desks and teaching literacy skills to visiting the sick and dying. The trip scheduled for this spring has been canceled due to the unsafe conditions.
Just what exactly is a “Chingy”?

By Joy Schaefer
Times Writer

Mel Gibson’s controversial film “The Passion of the Christ” displays, in gruesome detail, how Jesus from his faith with a Roman gladiator, or “cut o’ nine tails,” a multi-stapped whip with tib buds embedded with nails, glass and bone. Kristin Childs, Aquinas College junior, responded emotionally to the violent depiction of Jesus’ punishment but was able to watch the film with uncovered eyes, unlike many of her fellow audience members. “I will know what the outcome would be, and Jesus knew that this was going to happen, but he endured it because he knew what the end result would be.” Childs said. “Just thinking about that helped me to watch the violence.”

Childs plans to read the Bible this summer as a result of watching “The Passion.” “It’s true and I don’t go to Church every week, and I don’t know a lot about the Bible, but I almost think Gibson omitted much of Jesus’ story so that people like me can go and see it, it raises questions that they can only find out by going to church and reading the Bible. I think that he was trying to lead people to Jesus.”

Childs’ reaction to the film is extremely positive in comparison with some — numerous Jews and Christians alike have accused the film of having an anti-Semitic undertone. Nick Milburn, Freshman, disagrees with this suggestion. “A lot of the compulsion people towards the Jews were Jewish, like Simon and Veronica,” Milburn said. “It shows the undue brutality was a necessary aspect of the story. I think [the violence] needed to be seen. I know people need it so that we can see reality, it was bloody.” Milburn thinks the most poignant scene was the one in which Mary watches Jesus die on the cross. He believes it displays Mary’s acceptance of the events particularly well. “She was able to put her faith in God even though, earlier, you saw how hard it was watching her son being tortured. It was very empowering to see her faith and the love between Mather and Jesus.”

“The Passion” is blatantly anti-Semitic, but does think the film could have been made in a less offensive manner. “The crowd at the trial was overdone, and the film could have showed more of the support that Jesus had through his lifetime.” Wittenbach feels the violence, at times, was over dramatized. “The flogging scene was almost unbearable,” she said. Overall, however, she was impressed with the quality and adequacy of the film. “It shows the poignancy of the passion and the fact that we need to reflect on the passion.” KT VanOcker, fifth-year student, of the film’s themes, which explore the more sinister aspects of the filmmakers. The work of Stephen King, that King’s written work was unfaithful to the Bible. “I think if you go to the movie, and you’re looking for things that make the Jews look bad, that’s what you’re going to find,” VanOcker said. She added that a person who can similarly find that which they would like to find in the film.

In creating “The Passion,” Gibson found that which he wanted to find and shared it with us. The film reveals one person’s interpretation of Jesus’ last days and is not recorded in the Gospels. Whether or not we take it as truth is our choice.

“Chingy” Bay, a native of Selma, Ala., and producer of the film’s soundtrack, is a reformed rap artist. In 1996, he was sentenced to 14 years in prison for an arson attack. Bay was released in 2000 and has since released three albums. He is known for his unique style of rapping, which includes layering his vocals and using a variety of different sounds and textures. Bay has been credited with creating a new genre of music, known as “gangsta rap.” His music is characterized by its explicit lyrics and themes of violence and lawlessness. Bay has been praised for his ability to create a sense of tension and foreboding in his music, and his work has been described as a commentary on the social and political issues of his time.
Kutless is flawless with sophomore record

By Wes Creager

"Shadows Collide with People" is the title of the latest recording by songwriters/guitarist John Frusciante. Frusciante is best known for his mind-blowing work for alternative rock icons The Red Hot Chili Peppers.

With his new album, Frusciante combines his innovative guitar and vocal styles with mellow keyboard and electronic sounds. While parts of this album are reminiscent of the Peppers' latest album "By the Way," this is definitely Frusciante's own style. Two of the tracks that this album shares with "By the Way" are the falsetto harmonies and backup vocals that are a prominent part of several of this album's tracks.

"Carvel," the first track, starts out with a very pretty but slightly drawn out instrumental intro. The second track is entitled "Omission" and omits nothing important. Its one of the upbeat tracks this album, but it still holds with the mellow vibe issued by many of the other songs on this disc. Virtually every song on "Shadows" is laced with layered guitar to make this a very smooth listen from beginning to end.

Other standout tracks include the beautiful "Song to Sing When I'm Lonely" and the up-tempo "This Cold." While Frusciante was responsible for the majority of the sounds on "Shadows," he also received the help of fellow Pepper Chad Smith on drums. In addition, the song "The Slaughter" features fellow Pepper Flea on upright bass. Klingoffer plays almost everything from guitar to keyboards on the album as well as singing backup vocals. The album was produced brilliantly by Frusciante himself.

While the album does contain some similarities with some of the Peppers' albums, fans should not buy this thinking it is just another funk-flavored alternative album. This disc is much more of a mellow and introspective album. So while its melodies are both beautiful and well-crafted, it is not as catchy or upbeat as a Peppers CD.

If you are looking for a a good introspective rock album with well-conceived instrumental and vocal melodies, this is a good choice for you. If you are a Chili Peppers fan, this is a good look at what their current main man has to offer outside of the group. Don't go looking for a Chili Peppers clone as Frusciante's vocal styling is much different from that of Peppers frontman Anthony Kiedis. While it's definitely not the strength of the album, I would still recommend this CD to fans and non-fans alike or to anyone who likes a good introspective rock album.

"Anything Goes" in honor of the classics

The Brad Mehldau Trio is reinventing the jazz standard. For years, people thought that any jazz song of a standard is only a re-creation of the "standards" from earlier this century.

Re-creation of a song today is seen in the terms of sampling, splicing and the typical "cover band." But with jazz, the music is taken many steps further. A melody is re-configured and delivered as a DJ would in his club; establishing the mood and then throwing in seemingly spontaneous variations and often unacceptable abandonment. With this method, The Brad Mehldau Trio creates new standards through the popular alternative music of today and yesterday. The trio consists of Jorge Rossy on drums, Larry Grenadier on bass and Brad Mehldau on piano. Regarding John Coltrane, Miles Davis and Bach as his major influences, Mehldau's latest release further takes the jazz trio into amazing territory. This CD is "Modern Primitives," and Mehldau's latest release further takes the jazz trio into amazing territory.

The final track on the album is "It's Like Me," an interesting look at a man's faith. A man's faith may be so solid and inviolate that any effort to change his mind is in vain. But if his faith is not based on a factual foundation, then it is only an illusion.

The only thing I would fault this CD for is that, compared to Kutless's first CD, the tracks on this CD tend to be shorter, most only being a little over 3 minutes. Overall, however, this CD is a good opportunity to speak for and of Christ presented itself, but was overlooked. The listener is reminded that sharing one's faith may be enough to save another man's life, but may be enough to save that eternal life which is ultimately the only life that really matters.

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A plant to plant, a time to reap

What on earth made me decide to spend my entire Spring Break in Selma, Alabama? As a graduating senior with a dozen of papers and projects due in the next six weeks the last thing I needed to worry about was the trip away from all of my responsibilities for a week, but I did.

I don't know what inspired me to volunteer in Alabama. I have some family there and pleasant memories of visits there. But I also had enough time or money to invest in a vacation. The idea of serving the community of Selma, the center of the Civil Rights movement, was exciting and I longed to involve myself in a city so rich in history. So I signed up for the Service Learning trip to work with the Edmundite Missions Corps. As I learned more about how the Edmundite Missions Corps served the Selma community I grew more excited.

The ten of us piled into the van at 5 a.m. on Saturday and the trip began. After an overnight stay in Nashville, we arrived in Selma on Sunday evening and learned about what we would do during the week.

On Monday, the group was split in half and sent to separate locations to begin our mission work. Our group had field duty. The five of us pulled sheets of plastic left over from the previous year in fields where crops are grown organically. The plastic sheets insulate the seed, reduce weeds, and help reduce the amount of water needed for irrigation.

Organic crops offer an economic alternative to farmers with smaller tracts of land. Smaller organic farmers offer crops that aren’t sprayed with pesticides and thus customers are willing to pay a few cents more for crops grown without pesticides and weed killers. We got our hands in the soil and pulled the partially buried plastic and endured a few bites from the fire ants.

Two weeks later we still have little red bumps on our forearms as reminders of our experience with the fire ants. We covered clothes the ant bites and the bare earth we placed plastic and endured a few bites from the fire ants.

The field was a training facility used by churches and the Edmundite Missions who are involved in the Selma area. In the field we would learn how we can help out a community facility struggling financially to survive. The YMCA director had us help prepare the gymnasium and register area for renovation, work with the senior citizens kitchen area for renovation, and later we gathered an inventory of building supplies.

We were there to serve the community. Our experience could shape the lives of volunteers. Our acceptance.

Along the way we learned that community is built by working together to serve the common good and those lessons will not soon be forgotten.

By Katrina Kelly
Times Writer

The death penalty concerns every person living in Michigan, as well as everyone living in the United States. Recently, the state House voted on a resolution to pass capital punishment on the next ballot, bringing the issue before the people.

Although the bill did not pass with a two-thirds majority, the final outcome was 55-52, only 18 votes short. This is the second time in five years that there has been a legislative effort to end the 158 year ban on the death penalty.

As any “good” Catholic, I looked to the Catechism and my bible in reference before forming an educated opinion on a controversial issue. But, in regards to capital punishment, I’ve found that neither is sufficient.

Like the “good” Catholic that I am, I form my opinions based on what my faith tells me to believe. But the Roman Catholic Church does not require a person to support the death penalty nor to support the abolition of it.

Section 2266 of the Catechism clearly states three reasons for punishment in general. These are: defense of society against the criminal, rehabilitation of the criminal, and retribution or reparation of the disorder caused by the criminal’s transgression.

The death penalty is addressed in the section immediately following the piece on punishment. It states that capital punishment is appropriate if it “is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.”

The Catechism goes on to say that if non-lethal means are possible, and the safety of the people is not directly threatened, then these resources should be used first and that this passage neglects to consider the other reasons for punishment.

Traditionally, there are other legitimate purposes for punishment.

St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, both of whom were two of the Church’s greatest theologians... were in favor of the death penalty.

By Josh Wilford
Times Writer

For many centuries we have dreamed of what is held in the sky above us. We can merely ponder the wondrous and magnificent things that space has to offer us.

Perhaps we would discover intelligent life or make a discovery that would end up curing all disease on our planet, or find a new understanding of light energy. We can do is dream, and reach out with machines, like some sort of proverbial “imagination probe,” hoping to catch a glimpse of what we have created in our minds.

Of course, we could always sit outside and stare out at the night sky with a humongous telescope, looking for whatever we can find. This is how we discovered thousands of planets and objects. One of these objects is Sedna, a dwarf planet in the Kuiper Belt.

Sedna was discovered in 2003, and is the farthest known object from the Sun. As of now, we can see it faintly in a telescope but we have not yet been able to study its physical properties.

This puts Sedna in the deepest, darkest, and most frigid section of the solar system. Scientists estimate that the temperature on Sedna never rises above minus 240 degrees Celsius.

By Katrina Kelly
Times Writer

Humanity helping to lay down sod at a newly built home for residents of Selma. I have some family there and pleasant memories of visits there. But I also had enough time or money to invest in a vacation. The idea of serving the community of Selma, the center of the Civil Rights movement, was exciting and I longed to involve myself in a city so rich in history. So I signed up for the Service Learning trip to work with the Edmundite Missions Corps. As I learned more about how the Edmundite Missions Corps served the Selma community I grew more excited.

The ten of us piled into the van at 5 a.m. on Saturday and the trip began. After an overnight stay in Nashville, we arrived in Selma on Sunday evening and learned about what we would do during the week.

On Monday, the group was split in half and sent to separate locations to begin our mission work. Our group had field duty. The five of us pulled sheets of plastic left over from the previous year in fields where crops are grown organically. The plastic sheets insulate the seed, reduce weeds, and help reduce the amount of water needed for irrigation.

Organic crops offer an economic alternative to farmers with smaller tracts of land. Smaller organic farmers offer crops that aren’t sprayed with pesticides and thus customers are willing to pay a few cents more for crops grown without pesticides and weed killers. We got our hands in the soil and pulled the partially buried plastic and endured a few bites from the fire ants.

Two weeks later we still have little red bumps on our forearms as reminders of our experience with the fire ants. We covered clothes the ant bites and the bare earth we placed plastic and endured a few bites from the fire ants.

The field was a training facility used by churches and the Edmundite Missions who are involved in the Selma area. In the field we would learn how we can help out a community facility struggling financially to survive. The YMCA director had us help prepare the gymnasium and register area for renovation, work with the senior citizens kitchen area for renovation, and later we gathered an inventory of building supplies.

We were there to serve the community. Our experience could shape the lives of volunteers. Our acceptance.

Along the way we learned that community is built by working together to serve the common good and those lessons will not soon be forgotten.

By Josh Wilford
Times Writer

For many centuries we have dreamed of what is held in the sky above us. We can merely ponder the wondrous and magnificent things that space has to offer us.

Perhaps we would discover intelligent life or make a discovery that would end up curing all disease on our planet, or find a new understanding of light energy. We can do is dream, and reach out with machines, like some sort of proverbial “imagination probe,” hoping to catch a glimpse of what we have created in our minds.

Of course, we could always sit outside and stare out at the night sky with a humongous telescope, looking for whatever we can find. This is how we discovered thousands of planets and objects. One of these objects is Sedna, a dwarf planet in the Kuiper Belt.

Sedna was discovered in 2003, and is the farthest known object from the Sun. As of now, we can see it faintly in a telescope but we have not yet been able to study its physical properties.

This puts Sedna in the deepest, darkest, and most frigid section of the solar system. Scientists estimate that the temperature on Sedna never rises above minus 240 degrees Celsius.

By Katrina Kelly
Times Writer

The death penalty concerns every person living in Michigan, as well as everyone living in the United States. Recently, the state House voted on a resolution to pass capital punishment on the next ballot, bringing the issue before the people.

Although the bill did not pass with a two-thirds majority, the final outcome was 55-52, only 18 votes short. This is the second time in five years that there has been a legislative effort to end the 158 year ban on the death penalty.

As any “good” Catholic, I looked to the Catechism and my bible in reference before forming an educated opinion on a controversial issue. But, in regards to capital punishment, I’ve found that neither is sufficient.

Like the “good” Catholic that I am, I form my opinions based on what my faith tells me to believe. But the Roman Catholic Church does not require a person to support the death penalty nor to support the abolition of it.

Section 2266 of the Catechism clearly states three reasons for punishment in general. These are: defense of society against the criminal, rehabilitation of the criminal, and retribution or reparation of the disorder caused by the criminal’s transgression.

The death penalty is addressed in the section immediately following the piece on punishment. It states that capital punishment is appropriate if it “is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.”

The Catechism goes on to say that if non-lethal means are possible, and the safety of the people is not directly threatened, then these resources should be used first and that this passage neglects to consider the other reasons for punishment.

Traditionally, there are other legitimate purposes for punishment.
March 24, 2004

OPINION

Liberty means freedom to marry

By Laura Knack
Times Writer

Marriage. What images come to mind at that word? A fluffy white dress? The first dancing of a lifetime? The exchange of rings? These things are associated with marriage, but they are actually parts of the wedding day.

A marriage is a life-long commitment to support another person through good times and bad. But what are the parameters of marriage? Can it include same-sex couples, or is it only for the union of a man and woman?

The debate that has gained enormous attention over the past few months, due to some county’s decisions to begin issuing marriage licenses to gay couples. Some states have since ordered a halt on the licenses until the issue can be properly decided. As it stands right now, only two counties in Oregon are still issuing them without hindrance, although that could change at any time.

The number of gay couples entering into legal marriage says something interesting about homophobia or same-sex relationships. It suggests that the desires of gay couples are not all that different than those of straight couples. Homosexual couples have flocked to the areas of the country that are legalizing their marriages, eager for the recognition and equality that an official marriage offers them. Many people have asked why gay couples need to get married. Their motivations are very similar to straight couples.

Marriage is a respected institution; it represents a serious commitment, a benchmark of the significance of the relationship. It is a clear statement, to both parties as well as to the world, that this relationship is for life. People’s interpretations of cohabitation or wearing rings vary. It is true, but marriage carries a universal meaning.

Why not legalize gay marriage? In New York State, two Unitarian Universalist ministers have been charged with criminal offenses for marrying gay couples. As law professor Barbara Cox pointed out to Fox News, since the ministers never promised to uphold the law and can’t legally validate marriage, where’s the wrongdoing? Religious issues aside, marriage does more good than harm. It gives gay couples the recognition and benefits of marriage without infringing on the rights of anyone else.

Many critics of gay marriage, including President George W. Bush, say the institution of marriage must be preserved as a union between a man and a woman. They claim that legalizing homosexual marriage would be going against what marriage stands for and weakening the institution’s significance. It is true, but what about other occurrences in society that go against what marriage traditionally stood for?

Extramarital affairs and divorce do not keep with the idea that marriage is a sacred union between two people. Should we then amend the Constitution to make having affairs or getting divorced illegal? For the opponents of same-sex marriage, including President George W. Bush, it will be the first time our Constitution is challenged to take away rights and privileges from a group of individuals. If America is going to claim equality as one of its basic tenets, then we better start supporting equal rights for all citizens, regardless of sexual orientation, so that this nation can truly offer liberty and justice for all.

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Gender Corner
Is Aquinas College Catholic enough?

The Male View

Here at Aquinas College I have noticed something that can always be a deeper and a stronger commitment. This something is our Catholic identity. It is part of the Aquinas motto, “we are rooted in the Dominican Tradition.” I have noticed a lack of this “tradition” on the behalf of students especially when it comes to the topic of daily Mass at Bukowski Chapel. Celebrating Mass is an important part of being a Catholic and students do not seem to be aware of the joys of the Eucharist. I understand that many students have other commitments, but only 2 or 3 students and 6 to 8 faculty and staff members attend regularly. The Pope has described the Eucharist as one of the keystones of the Catholic faith, which is received each time at Mass. Should we fox them as Catholics want to follow what the church and its leaders have deemed as important?

This commitment should not simply be something viewed as a chore ordered by the Holy Father, but should be done because one wants to spend time with God. This should be an act of love for the Eucharist, and enrich our Catholic faith.

Daily Mass at Bukowski takes roughly 30 minutes and the blessings bestowed are amazing. Being faithful is not an easy task, but sacrificing half an hour during the lunch hour is not too difficult for this wonderful gift given by God. This is truly something that all of us Catholics can do, and are called to. So no matter where one is in their Catholic faith, attending Mass can truly help a person grow.

By Misty Stedman

The Female View

There are no required religious assemblies on our campus and students do not need to sign a declaration of faith to attend our school. But is Aquinas College Catholic enough? I would argue that it is. Choir and Philharmonic are regularly in the Bukowski Chapel, and we have a wonderful Campus Ministry staff that is very active on campus. Aquinas light and Spero are two examples of religious groups on campus that reach many students who are interested in exploring their faith. Our service learning program, including the Social Action Committee, is also closely related to the religious aspect of our school. If you are looking to participate actively in your Catholic faith, that option is certainly available to you at Aquinas.

However, Aquinas does not have a policy that forces anyone to participate in these activities. I think this makes sense because a person’s religious beliefs are an individual choice, rather than something that one should be forced to believe.

As a person who is not particularly religious, the atmosphere at Aquinas is very comfortable for me. I never feel pressured to participate in religious ceremonies or groups, and there are plenty of other non-religious groups to get involved with on campus. I think this is one of the great things about Aquinas; the Catholic faith is readily available to you if that’s what you’re looking for, but if you’d rather not participate, there is no pressure to conform to the Catholic faith.

The word “catholic” means “including or concerning all humankind,” and I feel that Aquinas embodies this definition. There are many students who attend this college who are not Catholic, but they feel comfortable on campus as well as the Catholic students. I wouldn’t want to go to any other type of school.

By Katie Jeske
If you think European sports are wimpy, you’re wrong...

American football is for sissies. Ok, so I wouldn’t say that to any NFL fans, especially the likes of Warren Sapp or any of those guys who have at 100 lbs. or not 200 lbs. on me. Most of them could probably eat me for lunch.

But honestly I found a sport that has more gut-wrenching hits, bloodied jerseys and crowd thrilling moments in a game then most NFL teams see all season. It’s called Rugby.

Recently I had the experience of watching a game of England’s Six Nations Rugby Tournament. It might have been the most exciting sporting event I’ve ever seen on TV, Ireland beat England at Twickenham in England. It was the first time Ireland had beat the English on British soil in 20 years.

Now we might scoff at our European buddies for their little cars, odd styles and obsession with David Beckham but with Rugby they have us beat. The sport is huge in Europe and around the world. America is starting to pick it up on the club level but it’s amazing that we haven’t adapted it as a major spectator sport.

The game of Rugby is an intense 80 minutes nonstop fury of athletic bliss.

Scrums, rucks, knock-ons and a handful of other events that seem to have come from another language make up the game. While the rules and terminology of the game are difficult to understand at first, the excitement of it is universal. It’s actually a lot easier to make up the game. While the rules and terminology of events that seem to have come from another language makes for a very exciting trip down the field.

Winter seasons wrap up at Aquinas

By Leah Herland

Sports Editor

Spring is in the air and winter sports have come to an end at Aquinas. Both basketball teams as well as indoor track have closed their season on their 2003-2004 seasons.

Women’s Basketball

Women’s basketball ended the season with a 7-5 record in the WHAC, finishing third in the conference. With 15-16 overall record, the Saints came back strong from a bad first half of the season. A school record seven game losing streak plagued the first half of the season. The Saints came back with nine wins in the last fifteen games.

Saints advanced to the second round of the WHAC tournament, beating Spring Arbor 80-76. A doubt to nationally ranked Seina Heights to end the season 71-85.

Sophomore Damien Beam was selected for the All-Newcomer team.

Men’s Basketball

Coach Hammer lead the Saints to a 18-13 overall record this season, the best start ever for a first year coach at Aquinas. Basketball finished 4th in the conference with 6-6, one game behind Cornerstone.

Sophomore David Ellis was named the WHAC Freshman of the Year.

Rugby

The Aquinas rugby team traveled down to Florida and got off to a fast start with impressive 18-4 and 18-8 victories against Philadelphia. Senior Jon Reeser picked up the win in the first game and junior Kyle Finch was the winner in the second game. In the 18-8 victory, sophomore Tim Muma provided some offensive fireworks with a grand slam. The Saints struggled in their next three games, two losses earlier in the season.

Xavier to the tune of 5-6 and 1-8 and a 1-7 loss to Anderson.

The Saints bounced back though with a win 26-12 win against Virginia Wesleyan.

Junior Jake Steffle picked up the win in relief for the Saints.

The Saints followed that win with a three game losing streak. Two of those losses were by one run, 3-4 in 12 innings and 2-7 in 10 innings.

The Lady Saints started their season off right with a back to back wins against Warren Southern and Robert Morris by scores of 3-1 and 2-1 before dropping to Florida Tech 4-8-4 record.

While the record may leave some to be desired, there are still four wins in the season. Senior Jeremy Foster is hitting .378 with 5 RBI and junior Ark Schenper is hitting .462 with 11 RBI. In the pitching department, Finch has a 3.00 ERA in fifteen innings. Schenper has a 1.30 ERA in 13 innings and freshman Jake Martin has a 2.70 ERA and a save in ten innings. The team can be seen in action at Kimball stadium on the 27 and 28 of March at 1:00.

Softball

The softball team also headed to the warm sun of Florida and came away with a 7-5 record.

The Lady Saints started their trip off right with a back to back wins against Warner Southern and Robert Morris by scores of 3-1 and 2-1 before dropping to Florida Tech 4-8-4 record.

The softball team can be seen in action on Thursday March 25 against Hope at the Aquinas Softball Field and again on Tuesday March 30 at the Aquinas Softball Field against Indiana Tech in their first WHAC game.

Men’s Tennis

The men’s tennis team also had an impressive spring leaving Florida with a 5-1 record. The 5 wins have all come in a row since dropping their opening match to Calvin. The five wins came against Haverford, Western Illinois, Coe, King’s and St. Ambrose.

Sophomore Carly Goodwin has been playing well in number one singles winning all five matches. The Goodwin/Senior Kara Ferguson doubles team is also undefeated on the season.

Women’s Tennis

The women’s tennis team also had an impressive spring leaving Florida with a 5-1 record. The 5 wins have all come in a row since dropping their opening match to Calvin. The five wins came against Haverford, Western Illinois, Coe, King’s and St. Ambrose.

Baseball

The Aquinas baseball team faced St. Xavier to the tune of 3-1 and 2-1 before dropping to Central Methodist. The third loss was a tough 4-14 loss to Tiffin.

Again the Saints came back strong with a 12-2 win in the first game.

Senior Jeremy Foster is hitting .378 with 5 RBI and junior Ark Schenper is hitting .462 with 11 RBI. In the pitching department, Finch has a 3.00 ERA in fifteen innings. Schenper has a 1.30 ERA in 13 innings and freshman Jake Martin has a 2.70 ERA and a save in ten innings. The team can be seen in action at Kimball stadium on the 27 and 28 of March at 1:00.