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D.A. ALL DAY!

"Turkey Time"

By Helen O.

Every year, the U.S. president pardons a turkey, so why shouldn't our Student Council presidents pardon one, too? In order to give this national tradition a little D.A. spice, STUCO called up Spirit Team and asked to borrow Dominic for the occasion.

With our turkey (or should I say tig-urky) in tow, we asked the D.A. community what they were thankful for and their responses became the fabric of Dominic's tail plumage. Some of the standouts included: "Not having to decide what to wear every day," "Christmas trees," "the opportunity to be able to love," and "pudding in the D.A. cafeteria fridge." It was a good reminder to reflect on all of the positivity in our lives.

The event was live-streamed during homeroom on the Monday before Thanksgiving and at the end, our Homeroom Reps hopped into frame to join in wishing everyone a Happy Thanksgiving! Dominic's turkey tail is hung on the wall now. Thanksgiving is officially over, but the things we are thankful for still remain, reminding us to find and spread joy throughout this holiday season. Next stop: Pardoning the Christmas ham!



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A Freshman's First Festifall at D.A.

By Kayleen D. '29

After a long day of school work, seniors and freshmen gathered for what would be one of the most fun-filled activities we have done this fall. I remember running to the auditorium with my friends, anxiously waiting to go inside to try the snacks and drinks Student Council prepared for us. Once everyone settled in with their homemade candy apples, popcorn, cupcakes, and lemonade, we started off with the Festifall Kahoot that Junior Orla B.,

Senior Annie M., and I made. It was a fast-paced, competitive, and lively trivia on how much the students knew about our school, pop culture, and the season of fall. Our top winners received gift cards to places like Dunkin Donuts, Starbucks, and more. After a cutthroat but enjoyable Kahoot, we gathered in the MPR for a karaoke battle! The sound of singing and dancing rang throughout the entire school and the students were definitely getting into the fall spirit. After a long, but entertaining karaoke evening, everyone headed home for the long weekend. Overall, Festifall was an amazing experience, but also a heartfelt tradition. It gave me a sense of community amongst my peers and started off November in one of the best ways possible for all participating D.A. students. I would go back in time to relive this



moment without changing a single thing.



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A True D.A. Thanksgiving

By Setareh B. '28

With the beginning of November come the holidays, a season of community, gratefulness and giving back to those in need. As the holiday break approaches, Dominican Academy students' days are filled with assignments, projects and exams but also a sense of communal spirit, just in time for Thanksgiving. During this time of the year, many D.A. students acknowledge things for which they are grateful. From specific foods to family members and friends, those at Dominican Academy have many people and things to be grateful for. To celebrate the holiday of thanks and honor the message of the season, D.A. hosts an annual food drive in the months of October and November. This drive, organized by the school's Campus Ministry Club, is a vital way the Dominican Academy community gives back to those in need. Students bring

in canned vegetables, grains, peanut butter, and other shelf stable items that are donated to The New York Common Pantry prior to the celebration of Thanksgiving. Another way that D.A. celebrates and fulfills the message of the November holiday, is through the yearly Thanksgiving Mass, which allows for the celebration of the physical and spiritual gifts we are blessed with, and commences the beginning of the break. This year, the Mass opened with a Call to Worship that truly made students understand what they are grateful for and how they can give back to those around them. The First Reading, a letter from Paul to the Corinthians, described the thanks that Paul gave to those who never stop believing in God and that Christ is always among them. The Psalm praised the Lord for loving us endlessly. Finally, the Gospel reminded us to thank the Lord, as he is our caretaker. To close the Mass, Dr. Egler explained not only the significance of Thanksgiving, but also how important it is to slow down during the long weekend. She highlighted the importance of spending time with the loved ones around us, instead of stressing about school work, extracurriculars and other activities. With this message in mind, Dominican Academy students were dismissed to enjoy a celebration with family, friends and food.



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D.A. Scientists Inside and Outside the Classroom

By Ysabela S. '27

From learning about physics and biology inside the classroom to building light curve models for extragalactic supernovae and creating literature reviews on the efficacy of AI-based models in large vessel occlusion detection, D.A. students have been developing their inner Albert Einstein! Over the summer, seniors Sabrina O. and Anusuiya B. conducted advanced college-level research on various STEM-based topics, preparing themselves for their future endeavors.

Sabrina O. attended the prestigious Yale Summer Program in Astrophysics (YSPA), which consisted of two parts: a two-week online program and a four-week on-campus program. The two weeks laid out the foundations of what students would need to conduct the research projects at Yale, which included exercises with coding, physics, and astronomy.

Sabrina states, “This year’s main research project was to build a light curve model for extragalactic supernovae by using in-person and remote telescopes to gather data. There were two minor projects as well: creating a CMD model of an open star cluster (my team’s was NGC 6871 in the constellation of Cygnus), and photographing a nebula of our choosing (ours was the Eagle Nebula, otherwise known as the Pillars of Creation).”

She also describes the challenges she faced. For example, she was required to use

advanced calculus to find how many stars can fit inside a given star cluster. She said, “This problem alone took me over four hours to complete. On the final day, we presented our research to Yale faculty and staff and submitted our research on the supernova to a database for astrophysicists specializing in star formation... The focal point of this entire experience was the supernova; my supernova is called SN 2025 maven, discovered in late May, and is a Type IIb (we discovered its classification).”

Sabrina, an aspiring theoretical astrophysicist, discussed how YSPA gave her the opportunity to conduct original research in astrophysics, as well as taught her how to use skills that would be useful in her future career, such as coding, advanced calculus/linear algebra, and telescope use. “I now know I am prepared to become an astrophysicist because of how much I learned. It was the most challenging yet enriching experience of my life.”

On the other hand, Anusuiya B. participated in three selective programs: the ACCOMPLISHED Community Health Program, the Medicine and Research Summer Program (IYRC), and the Global Health Leaders Conference hosted by Johns Hopkins University.

In the ACCOMPLISHED Community Health Program, Anusuiya designed and executed a health outreach capstone project addressing stroke awareness and response. She states, “In this capstone, I delivered a stroke awareness literacy lecture to 40-plus high school students based in India. I reached this



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audience via a partnership with the Ek Kadam Aur (One Step Forward) Foundation, an organization committed to increasing access to education for underserved students in India and Nepal. From this session, students were encouraged to share their learnings in their communities through a poster-making competition between schools, where posters reflected the common symptoms of stroke.” In addition, she served as a Health Literacy Liason, educating others in her community on health awareness content and helping them develop health plans.

In the IYRC Medicine and Research Summer Program, she conducted a research synthesis on the efficacy of AI-based models in large vessel occlusion detection. She states, “During ischemic strokes, our brains age approximately 3.6 years for every hour after stroke onset times, which makes it extremely important to close the gap between onset and treatment. A significant number of ischemic strokes worldwide are specifically caused by large vessel occlusions (LVOs), which occur when there is a blockage in a major artery supplying blood to the brain. With recent advancements in technology, especially including AI, researchers have been experimenting with using AI models to detect LVOs.” The purpose of her literature is to analyze and draw conclusions based on recent experiments to determine which areas demonstrate positive performance and which areas require improvement.

Lastly, Anusuiya was selected as a student speaker in the Global Health Leaders

Conference, where she presented on the use of AI in Tuberculosis Diagnosis. She describes the impact of these research and capstone projects as a “reminder” to herself that the strength of knowledge truly rises when it is shared, a perspective that she will keep with her as she pursues her dream of becoming an emergency room doctor.

These two students and their dedication to their research set examples for other D.A. students aspiring to follow similar paths in the STEM field. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for Sabrina and Anusuiya!

“Engross yourself in your desired profession or interest...Above all, just be true to yourself and what you want to do with your life. You only have one life, so make the best of it and follow your dreams regardless of what anyone says.”

- Sabrina O. '26

“I think that we grow best when we challenge ourselves, and through research, we can commit to expanding on our own interests and develop tangible ways to communicate them to others. In any field, whether computer science, biology, physics, or humanities, there is so much to discover, and you truly can do hard things.”

- Anusuiya B. '26



The Christmas Dance: NYC's Best Holiday Attraction

By Sophie N. '26

When you think of Christmastime in New York City, the bustling crowds gathering around the iconic tree at Rockefeller Center might come to mind. Or maybe it is the eye-catching windows at Macy's, intricately curated with animatronics constantly in motion. To any past or present student at 44 E 68th street, D.A. is the quintessential hidden Christmas attraction, and the combined community brings the utmost holiday cheer.

Past the chilling city night air, the wrought-iron doors open to a winter wonderland. The warmth and warm tones of the lobby greet you as you take in its beauty. The two towering Christmas trees frame the iconic red stairs, highlighting the red velvet with their twinkling crimson ornaments. Lush poinsettias in golden pots, garland, and glittering gowns invite you to ascend the stairs to the mezzanine.

Once you are unburdened by taking off your heavy coat, hat, and scarf at the cafeteria, you make your way to the main showpiece of the night. On the second floor, you are astonished by the Christmas cacophony before your very eyes. The Mezz is dim except for the glowing golden lights wrapped around the railings and doorframes of the auditorium and MPR. On your left are delicious mini cupcakes and chocolate chip cookies, as well as sodas stacked to replicate Christmas trees. You can hear the booming

bass and excited cheers from the closed auditorium doors.

As you enter the MPR, laughter and jovial conversation bounce off the green velvet walls. The wheeled desks are replaced with snowy white tables, flickering candles light the way to your classmates dressed to the nines, enjoying their holiday treats with their friends and guests. As you take a seat with your friends to enjoy some cupcakes and Coca-Cola, a familiar C-chord strikes your ears. This could only mean one thing, the ultimate D.A. anthem, Mr. Brightside, blasts across the hall behind the wooden doors. You, your friends, and other MPR inhabitants rush to the auditorium, where the music fills all of your senses.

The auditorium is completely dark save for neon lights cascading down the windows, illuminating the room with blaring blues and electric pinks. The energy is almost as bright as the string lights, each body in the room jumps and crashes into one another, joining into one single bonded community. For some senior girls in this room, this marks the last time they will be dancing to this song before the prom. It is a very bittersweet moment, but it is not filled with tears and mourning. It is one single body of girls screaming this song which has followed them on every occasion for the past four years.

As the lights turn on and everyone makes their way to where they had started from, STUCO pulls the curtain on another dance well planned by restoring D.A. to its proper order. Within a matter of minutes, wood and velvet chairs line the perimeter of



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the auditorium while the comfy couches and tabletops return to the mezzanine. You descend the red stairs in a dazzling long blue dress and realize that the next time you will be doing this, your color of choice will be white.

You step out into that cutting winter air feeling physically drained from all the jumping yet exhilarated from the night you just had. No decorative window nor monumental tree can rival what it feels like to truly be filled with the holiday spirit. Adornments and ornaments can be pleasing to the eye, but a tight-knit community immersed in song and one another brings true Christmas cheer.

More Than Just a Dance

By Paloma G. '28

The Father Daughter Dance is one of Dominican Academy's biggest events, and it is the one my dad and I look forward to the most every year. There are so many factors that are perfectly planned to make our experience better, such as the venue, the food, and the prizes. Talking about the venue, the Father Daughter Dance takes place at The View in Battery Park. I understand where they found the name for the venue, as the views are absolutely incredible. You can see the lights of the New Jersey skyline reflect on the Hudson River. If you look close enough, you can even see the Statue of Liberty. While getting ready, I was so excited to see my friends. I was also reminiscing about last year's dance, and I remembered that I took a tumble down the stairs at the venue. Thankfully, I was okay

and was able to continue dancing the rest of the night. However, I was worried that I would make the same mistake again, so I told myself to be extra careful. My dad and I travelled from the Upper West Side on the one train down to the View at the very last stop, which is South Ferry.

When I stepped out of the train, the sky was pitch black. It was hard to tell where my dad and I were going, despite trying to use Google Maps. Thankfully, I noticed that there were some other D.A. students in front of us, so we just followed them. When I arrived at the venue, I noticed how lively it was. I saw dads talking to and laughing with each other. I saw their daughters too, who also seemed to be having fun. This filled me with a warm sense of joy as I loved seeing D.A. come together as a close community. At last, I saw my friends in the crowd. Our dads had known each other from the previous father-daughter dance last year, so they immediately started chatting. My friends and I went to the drinks area and took advantage of the unlimited Shirley Temples. I must have had at least five of them by the end of the night. I walked around in the main area and noticed that waiters were passing around appetizers. There were many choices, but the one that stood out to me was the dumplings. Dumplings are one of my favorite foods, and I had never seen dumplings so perfectly fried.

As my friends, our dads, and I made our way up the stairs to begin dinner, I made sure I was tightly gripping the railing. Upstairs, we claimed our table and sat down.



While we were eating, Dr. Egler made a speech explaining her gratitude for the school community and thanking everyone who worked to set up the dance. There were also some of the parents from the D.A. parents association who explained how the raffle would work. I bought two ticket strips, so I felt like I had a good chance of winning a prize. Before our dessert came, they began to call the numbers for the raffle. Each number they called made me increasingly more nervous. Near the end of the raffle, they finally called my number. After frantically searching my ticket numbers to see if one matched the number called, the excitement I felt when I realized I had a match was unimaginable. I jumped up, not expecting to win, and ran to the prizes. I decided to pick the Adidas gift card as I was in need of some new shoes. The dessert came soon after, and it was a delicious and rich chocolate cake with vanilla ice cream on top.

Everyone was done eating, so the dance floor was opened up. The song choices ranged from new songs, like Golden by K-Pop Demon Hunters, to iconic songs such as Gasolina by Daddy-Yankee. For a whole hour, my friends and I danced our hearts out. Our dads even joined in on a few songs. When the last song began to play, I grabbed my dad and we danced together. After a long night, my feet were sore and I was so tired. I said bye to my friends and hopped in an Uber home. Even though I was exhausted when I arrived home, I thought of how this father-daughter dance would truly be a memory that lasts forever.

Exploring D.A.: A Look Into This Year's Shadow Day

Elnaz M. '28

Every year, prospective students interested in D.A. are given the chance to spend a day with a current student to experience the opportunities our school has to offer. This is a great way to meet teachers, tour the school, and even learn about clubs or sports. However, this year things ran a little differently. Usually, prospective students can choose any day in a certain time frame to do their Shadow Day. This year, November 19th, was solely dedicated to giving students the full D.A. adventure.

Those who are Student Ambassadors dedicated their time to come to school on their day off and participate in this event. Now you might be wondering how this day went for prospective students. Well, firstly, students were split into different groups and had a schedule for how the day would go. They would move around the school and attend mock classes. Last year, some shadow students were not able to see what every class was like because there might have been either a test, an absent teacher, or a study period instead of class. However, this year, potential students had an idea of a regular school day, interacted with other students, and met several teachers. After their day came to an end, students were treated to a juice of their choice and a snack such as Goldfish, chocolate-chip cookies, or chips.

I volunteered at this event and was stationed in the Wet Lab. Here, students had



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their STEM-related classes. As the first group of students walked in, I noticed that some were apprehensive, others were chatting with their friends from middle school, and a few were even excited. They took their seats and began to work. In the lab, the goal was for students to find out what “surface tension” is and test it using pennies. Students had a cup of normal tap water and another cup with salt water. In pairs, with a dropper, one student slowly added water to the surface of the penny until the penny had so much water that it overflowed, and then the students stopped adding water. Then another person repeated the same process with the salty water. As I walked around trying to guide the students, I noticed that they were giggling and sighing when their penny water dome finally burst. Everyone was engaged in the activity, learning, and enjoying themselves.

This year’s Shadow Day was truly a fun time for students considering D.A. It offered them a better understanding of what a school day is like, without any interruptions. Every volunteer, whether it was students, faculty, or staff, was dedicated to ensuring everything went smoothly. The constant effort and kindness of the D.A. community was consistently demonstrated, a visitor remarked, “She had an exceptional experience, and we are grateful for the wonderful education and supportive community she experienced there.” We should also take the time to recognize the hard work of Mrs. Checo, our Admissions Director, who organized and planned the event. Her dedication and attention to detail

ensured that the event ran smoothly and was welcoming for all who attended. Ms. Checo’s commitment to supporting students and families made the experience both meaningful and memorable.

IFTJ Ignatian Family Teach-In For Justice

Vivienne S. ‘26

This year’s Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice (IFTJ) took place on a windy November weekend in Washington, D.C. Three seniors, including myself, and four juniors from D.A. attended the exciting trip. IFTJ is a place for members of the Ignatian family (Jesuit institutions and larger church) to be empowered, re-energized, inspired, challenged, and supported by a community that sees faith and justice integrally linked. Now in its 28th year, the teach-in has a rich history rooted in honoring the Jesuits and their companions who were martyred in El Salvador in 1989. This year’s main themes were migration and climate justice.

We attended all three days of the teach-in, including an orientation; two days of breakout rooms, guest speeches, and networking sessions; and the third day being Advocacy Day. One of the main guest speakers featured this year was Father Greg Boyle, a name you will surely recognize if you’ve taken a certain junior-year Christian Ethics class. There were so many schools and so many students gathered in one place, all ready to learn and speak up about the same issues. You could feel the speakers’ passion and the audience’s hope in every



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round of inspired applause. It was something special to be surrounded by driven teenagers, eager to unite faith and justice and make meaningful use of the present moment. Music played a big role too: The organizers taught us two original songs that everyone knew by heart by the end of the first day. The music was repeated throughout the weekend to generate excitement and make everyone gather.

Dozens of breakout sessions were offered, which made choosing only three surprisingly difficult. We all huddled together on the first night, reading descriptions and circling our top options. Each breakout lasted about an hour and featured one or two speakers advocating for a particular issue. I attended sessions titled *Pollution, Power, and People: A Call to Ecological Justice*; *Journeying Toward Justice in Israel-Palestine*; and *Grace and Justice on Death Row*. Each one captivated me and challenged me in new ways. The sessions allowed us to split up, focus on issues we personally cared about, and move closer to areas where change is urgently needed. During *Grace and Justice on Death Row*, lawyer Brian Stolarz described his work advocating for Alfred Dewayne Brown, the former death-row prisoner he helped exonerate. Brown usually joins him for the presentation, but he was unable to fly to Washington, D.C. this year. The speakers in every session were deeply committed to sharing the truth with the young people in the room and encouraging us to continue stepping into difficult but necessary

conversations, just as we had by choosing those breakout rooms.

Monday was Advocacy Day. We traveled to Capitol Hill and joined hundreds of other IFTJ attendees. We sang, chanted, and listened to even more powerful speeches. Holding signs advocating for migration and climate reform high above our heads, we became part of a collective call for justice. After the Capitol Hill gathering, we met with representatives from New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand's office. Students from several schools, including two D.A. juniors, Eileen L. and Nina M., presented talking points based on IFTJ's justice themes, using personal stories and confident declarations to extend all they had learned over the weekend. We then delivered letters signed by D.A. students and families to Senator Chuck Schumer's office before heading home.

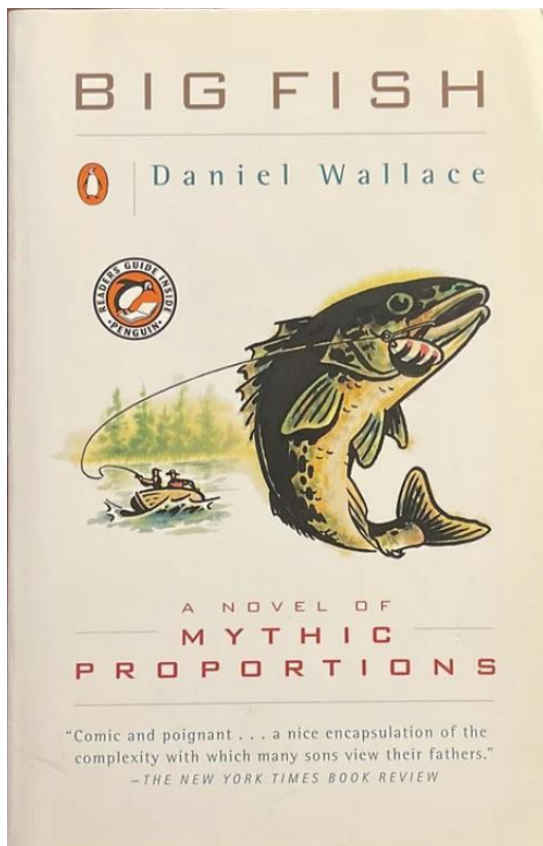
The weekend was not only a wonderful bonding experience for our group and a chance to meet many like-minded people, but it was also an extraordinary opportunity to stand in a space where faith and justice were alive and resounding all around us. We all learned something new and were inspired in a completely different way. Three days count more than you think when you work together and wake up three times with the determination to make a difference.



COLUMNS

Catching Big Fish by Daniel Wallace

By Ana D. '26



Book of the Issue: *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* by Daniel Wallace

Rating : 🐾🐾🐾

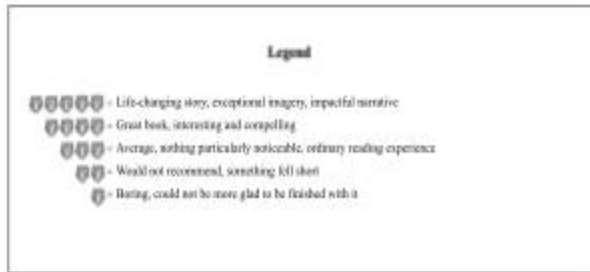
Perusing my local bookstore for my next feature, I was particularly entranced by a familiar title, *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions*. If you have ever watched the cult-classic 2003 film *Big Fish* by director Tim Burton, you would undoubtedly understand why I immediately snatched up

the last copy on the shelf, ecstatic to review it. Unfortunately it fell a bit short of my high expectations.

Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions follows the tales of Edward Bloom, an extraordinary man, hero, friend, but most importantly a father. Through glimpses of Edward's tall tales about good deeds and challenges he surpassed, we get a sense of the exceptional man Edward Bloom seemed to be. Despite these childish tales, William Bloom, Edward's son, wishes to truly understand his evasive father before he passes.

The issue with *Big Fish* was simply that the stories felt short and the language was a bit too blunt, not allowing the reader to fully visualize Edward Bloom's chronicles. Although Daniel Wallace, the author, fails to truly transport the reader due to the brevity of the stories, I still enjoyed the creative narratives and at times emotional realizations both Edward and William come to. Thus, *Big Fish: A Novel of Mythic Proportions* makes for an acceptable quick coffee shop read, though I would suggest watching the exceptional film adaptation first. *Big Fish*, the movie, smoothly portrays the narratives of the Blooms far better than the book unsuccessfully attempts.

Let me know if you have any comments or book recommendations by emailing me at adelgado2026@dominicanacademy.org.



Upper Eats Side
Food Review: UpThai
Vivienne S. '26

Rating:

Merry December Upper Eats Siders! The weather is getting colder, and we are trying to stay warm in our plaid skirts. It is the perfect time for a warm, comforting meal on which you can depend. I have given you all one of the best Christmas gifts you could ask for: A five-Tiger-token destination for the holiday season.

UpThai is located on Second Avenue between 73rd and 74th streets. The restaurant was established in 2014. Over the years, UpThai has evolved from a modest neighborhood dining spot into a well-recognized fixture of the Upper East Side's dining scene. Their approach has been to marry traditional Thai flavors and dishes with fresh, seasonal ingredients and some creativity!

From the moment you step in, you are enveloped by a cozy, warm, and slightly eclectic ambiance. The lighting is soft and dim thanks largely to the cluster of colorful hanging lanterns that punctuate the ceiling and cast a gentle, warm glow across the

room. Each stained-glass lamp is different in its own way, and you should all go pick your personal favorite (and guess which one is



mine). There is a harmonious mix of design influences: rustic wood accents, exposed brick, and an interior that nods to a bohemian, Thai-garden style. Plants and greenery, subtly suspended or tucked into corners, soften the space further. The seating arrangement is snug. Tables were on the smaller side and placed fairly close together. Because of this, there is a certain intimacy perfect for family nights or casual dinners with friends, but the tight spacing can certainly be felt when the place fills up. There is also a bar area and extra seating in the front, adding to the sense that this isn't just a take-out Thai spot: The space invites you to sit and stay a while.

My guests and I arrived at UpThai in the early evening, just before the rush, and the service could not have been more



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welcoming. The server walked me through a few menu favorites, checked in at thoughtful moments, and made the whole experience feel relaxed and unrushed. With the dining room still quiet, dishes came out promptly, and there was a calm energy to the place that set the tone for the rest of the meal. It felt like the staff genuinely wanted us to enjoy our time there, and it made the early-hour visit especially pleasant.

The menu has you flipping through pages of carefully curated options of proteins, spice levels, appetizers, entrées, and sides. My guests and I ordered a Thai iced tea and a lychee Thai tea, both of which were incredibly flavorful and refreshing. For appetizers, we had the curry puffs and the steamed dumplings (filled with ground chicken and shrimp, water chestnuts, and shiitake mushrooms served with tangy soy sauce). I would probably skip over the steamed dumplings since they were nothing special on the tongue, and too many were left over on the plate for me to sing any high praise. In contrast, the curry puffs' plate was scraped clean. The crispy, slightly flaky outer shell of the pastry gives a pleasant crunch on the first bite, contrasting with the warmer, softer interior. Inside, the mixture of minced chicken, tender potatoes, and onions, melded with curry powder, offers a mild but fragrant flavor. They were savory, slightly spiced, with earthy heat rather than overwhelming intensity. Served alongside was a sweet cucumber relish I really enjoyed. It helped cut through the richness, adding a refreshing contrast to the savory puff. My guest was even eating the sauce

with her fork before the waitress slowly removed the plate from us (with a look of genuine concern).

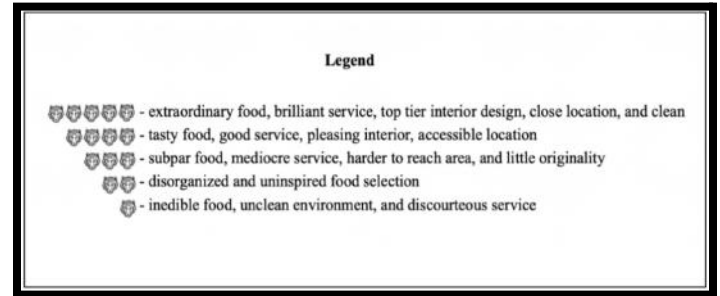
For entrees, we went all out. We ordered the Pad Se-ew with chicken, Kana Moo Krob, and Up Thai Fried Rice Claypot (Sea scallop, shrimp, chicken, Chinese sausage, onion, scallions, and shiitake mushrooms). I need to pause writing this to pat myself on the back for the excellent choices made. Every dish was a hit. At Up Thai, Pad Se-Ew is offered as broad rice noodles with Chinese broccoli and egg with thick soy sauce and your choice of protein. Traditionally, Pad Se-Ew is a stir-fried noodle dish whose charm lies in simplicity. Chewy rice noodles charred lightly in a hot wok, enveloped in a rich, slightly sweet and savory dark soy-based seasoning, combined with the crisp Chinese broccoli and a fried egg. Choosing chicken instead of the usual pork or beef, the dish had a lighter protein profile, allowing the universal wok seasoning and sauce to remain at the forefront. Moving on to the Kana Moo Krob, which the waitress insisted I attempt to pronounce instead of subtly point to, the dish typifies a comforting “over-rice” offering. The pork belly delivers crispy, caramelized skin and rich, fatty meat, a nice textural and flavor counterpoint to the mild bitterness and fresh crunch of Chinese broccoli. The fried egg on top adds richness and helps bring the components together. The dish is perfect for anyone who wants depth and contrast. It is decadent but balanced. The pork belly was cooked well, crispy on the outside without remaining dry.



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Finally, we had the UpThai Fried Rice Clay pot, a chef's special entree on the menu. The clay-pot cooking method entails an aromatic sealed-heat preparation: rice cooked with proteins and toppings in a heavy pot, often yielding slightly crisp bits on the bottom, mingling flavors more deeply, and carrying a pleasing earthy aroma. The inclusion of extra elements such as the shiitake mushrooms, scallion, and onion added depth and umami, making the dish more complex than your basic fried rice. The dish arrived steaming and ready for a stir and taste. In my opinion, this dish showcased Up Thai's ability to blend traditional Thai-style stir-fry with more elaborate, restaurant-style cooking.

All in all, UpThai delivered exactly the kind of comfort, warmth, and flavor we all crave during the holiday season. From the inviting ambiance to the thoughtfully prepared dishes, it is a spot that proves why it has become a neighborhood favorite. Consider this your official push to add it to your winter dining rotation. You will leave full, cozy, and maybe even planning your next visit before you have stepped back into the cold.



Ms. Rossi's Most Popular Club

By Alice M. '28

Have you ever wondered what a day in the life of a Dominican Academy teacher entails? How do our teachers get ready for a busy school day? What small joys do they experience? What routines are an important step of their everyday lives? I had the opportunity to see what a day in the life is like for Ms. Rossi, D.A.'s Dean of Students and history and psychology teacher. Ms.



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Rossi has been teaching at Dominican Academy for eight years and is responsible for the well being of all students. She sends schedule reminders for uniforms, enforcing the student body handbook, and overseeing students.

Ms. Rossi starts her morning with a cup of coffee and some quiet time to reflect. She then gets ready and begins her commute from Brooklyn. Ms. Rossi enters D.A. in the early morning, well before students arrive. She goes up to her office to organize a to-do list and center herself before classes. She looks forward to greeting students in the halls and welcoming students as they enter the building. Ms. Rossi appreciates any conversations she may have throughout the day with students. During the day she teaches AP U.S. History and AP Psychology, where she values intellectual discussions and teaching engaged students. At the end of the day, Ms. Rossi looks forward to Mock Trial and Psychology Club, both of which she moderates. You will, of course, also find Ms. Rossi moderating detention in Room 5, as Ms. Rossi jokingly referred to as, “my most popular club.” Ms. Rossi ends her day responding to emails before she returns home to start her routine over again.

Overall, Ms. Rossi has a busy day in D.A. but finds her joy in the conversations she has with students and interacting with the whole Dominican Academy community. She is an integral part of this institution, so next time you are in the halls and see Ms. Rossi, say hello!

A Penny to Millions

By Paloma G. '28

Would you rather have one million dollars or a penny that doubles everyday for 30 days? My guess is most of you said one million dollars. You probably thought, “A penny is so small, there is no way it could get to one million dollars in 30 days!” Well I am here to tell you that the doubling penny is actually the better option. Don’t believe me? Let me show you. You would only start off with a meager \$0.01, and by day 10, you would have about \$5. Just stick with me, I promise it gets good soon. By day 20, you would make \$5,242. By day 25, you would have \$167,772 and by day 28, you would have \$1,342,177. Finally, by day 30, you would have a whopping \$5,368,709. Do you believe me now? This is a great example of something called compound interest.

If you do not remember from my previous article where I briefly mentioned it, compound interest is interest that is calculated on the original amount of money you started with, as well as the already accumulated interest on your money from previous periods. As a refresher, interest is a percentage of your money that gets accumulated over time. To help you better understand compound interest, let me give you an example. Let's say you invested in a stable company that has an average interest rate of 10% each year. If you initially invested \$1,000, you would earn \$100 on your invested money by the end of the year. This brings your total amount of money invested in this company to \$1,100. The



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next year, you would earn another 10% on your current invested money in the company, which is \$1,100. 10% of \$1,100 is 110, bringing your new total of money invested in this company to \$1,210. This pattern would keep on continuing, growing your money exponentially over time.

Something important to remember with compound interest is to not confuse it with simple interest. Simple interest is only calculated on the principal amount, so the amount of interest earned on your money will be the same each year. Going back to my previous example, year one with simple interest is the same as your money invested would still be \$1,100. However, the next year you would only earn \$100 compared to \$110 on your invested money as the interest is calculated on your initial amount. Although the difference doesn't seem that stark, over time, simple interest will earn you much less money than compound interest.

Now you may be wondering, why is compound interest important? Well, as I mentioned before, with compound interest your money grows over time. The more time passed means the more time your money has to compound, so it is vital to start investing as early as possible. Even a small amount of money can go a very long way. If you start investing \$1,000 dollars a year into a stable stock, such as the S&P 500 (a collection of the leading 500 companies in the stock market), your money will still increase over time no matter the amount. In 20 years, investing \$1,000 each year (assuming annual

10% interest), will result in approximately \$57,275 at the end of 20 years. In all, remember that compound interest is frankly a financial superpower, so make sure you take advantage of it.

A Dash of Happiness and a Sprinkle of Gratitude- Christmas Edition

By Melissa B. '26

With the last bits of the Thanksgiving turkey and stuffing barely gone, the most wonderful time of the year has officially arrived. On every corner, we see people starting their Christmas shopping for the perfect gift, red and green lights twinkling down the street, and trees strung up on top of cars, just waiting to be put up. Even though the season just started, my family has already begun the huge list of preparations for the big day. In the coming weeks, you could be sure to see my family in Little Italy, buying half of the Bronx's supply of pasta for our family's Christmas Day party. But amid all of the "hustle and bustle" of the season, people can lose sight of the real meaning of the season:

Welcoming Jesus into our hearts and (like Thanksgiving) being grateful for all of the things that made our year better.

Remembering the real reason for the season is just as important as the preparations for the holiday. For this edition, I interviewed the junior class. This month, my focus was, of course, Christmas.

The first junior I interviewed was Ysabela S. This month, she was grateful for her friends and family. She was most excited



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to visit her cousins in Maryland. I asked a special question in honor of this month, asking what was their favorite Christmas tradition in their family. Ysabela said that she loved preparing a big feast with her family with traditional Filipino food.

The second junior I interviewed was Hailey R. Just like Ysabela, she was most grateful for her family. This Christmas, she was most excited to see her grandparents from the Dominican Republic and spend some quality time with them. Her favorite Christmas tradition in her family was making rice and pernil for dinner and opening presents on Christmas Eve.

As for me, I am most excited to celebrate the season. It's especially exciting this year because I am helping direct the Christmas children's choir at my church. I used to sing in that choir when I was in grade school, so I'm so excited to give back to the kids in my community. Just like Ysabela and Hailey, I'm also excited for the food. Since my family hosts Christmas, it's always a huge affair, full of some of the most delicious Italian foods.

I will be back in the New Year to report on your good news. Seniors, you're due next! Be on the lookout for an email with a link to submit your good news. I hope you have an amazing Christmas and a Happy New Year! I encourage you to make your Christmas break better by thinking about what's important and grounding yourself in the present. Even through all the busyness of the holidays, you can make time to think about your blessings and use them to improve your New Year. As always, make

sure to add a Dash of Happiness and a Sprinkle of Gratitude to your life!

Arts and Architecture Colum- How a 19th Century Ballet Became a Beloved Icon of the Christmas Season

By Iris M.'27

Whether or not you have seen a live production of *The Nutcracker*, you have probably heard the Waltz of the Sugarplum Fairy in department stores or TV commercials. The ballet, composed by Tchaikovsky and adapted from a children's book, has come a long way from its relatively unsuccessful 1892 premiere. *The Nutcracker's* immense popularity today stems largely from choreographer George Balanchine's 1954 staging for the New York City Ballet. Since then, *The Nutcracker* has become a holiday tradition and one of the most widely-performed ballets around the world.

In response to an 1891 commission from the Russian imperial theater, composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky and choreographer Marius Petipa (who also choreographed *Swan Lake*) collaborated on the first production of *The Nutcracker*, based on a more lighthearted adaptation of German writer E.T.A. Hoffman's novella "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King," then seen as too dark for a ballet. Though frequently modified, the original production's plot tells the story of a young German girl named Clara (or Marie, depending on the



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production) who receives a toy nutcracker from a mysterious family friend at Christmas. Late at night, Clara sneaks out of bed to look at the presents under the tree but is swept up in a dream where a battle between a life-sized version of the nutcracker and a giant mouse king is taking place. Once the nutcracker defeats the rat, he turns into a prince and escorts Clara through a snowy forest. In the second act, they arrive in a magical kingdom of sweets, where personified treats like hot chocolate, tea, and marzipan, as well as flowers, dance for them. In many productions, these treats represent different countries of the world. A long and elegant duet is danced by the Sugarplum fairy and her partner towards the end of the act. At the end of the ballet, the nutcracker prince takes Clara on a flying sleigh out of the Land of Sweets.

The first production in 1892 was not a great success, being widely dismissed as childish and overly focused on the music at the expense of the story. Critics at the time found the plot of the second act weak, especially compared to contemporary dramatic ballets such as *Swan Lake*.

Although it continued to be performed occasionally, *The Nutcracker* only reached its current level of fame in 1954, when George Balanchine, a famous choreographer and co-founder of the New York City Ballet staged his own production for the company. Described by a critic after its premiere as “a fantasy ballet for children, like a toy that a grown-up makes with thoughtful care,” Balanchine’s version combined intricate choreography with

elaborate costumes and sets. It included elements such as a giant Christmas tree that grows from around 12 to 41 feet on stage, a blizzard of paper snow, a glittering backdrop of lace and desserts in the second act, and Mother Ginger, who dances for Clara and the Prince in act two and wears a giant hoop skirt that hides eight small children underneath. Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker* quickly became the company’s signature performance and is still danced every year.

Televised performances in 1957 and 1958 meant that Balanchine’s *The Nutcracker* became many Americans’ first introduction to ballet of any kind. Today, companies around the world stage hundreds of versions of *The Nutcracker* every holiday season. For most ballet companies, *The Nutcracker* is also the most profitable performance of the year. As dancer and choreographer Deborah Damast, who works at New York University’s graduate dance program, explained, *The Nutcracker* “has all the elements, right? It’s got intrigue. It’s got magic. It’s got candy.” Unsurprisingly, perhaps, ticket sales from *The Nutcracker* often make up around half of a company’s yearly revenue.

Today, *The Nutcracker* is an essential part of Christmas. Christmas movies or commercials frequently sample its score, and nutcracker-themed decorations adorn storefronts and houses. New interpretations of the ballet continue to emerge, from a Lunar New Year themed production, to a hip-hop *Nutcracker*, and beyond. “I sort of knew the premise of *The Nutcracker* before seeing it just because I had seen productions



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of it but I like how different people are interpreting the story in new ways and creating new themes and messages that the ballet can portray,” said Orla B. ‘27, who recently watched a New York City-themed production of the ballet at the Manhattan Youth Ballet. One hundred and thirty-three years after its first premiere, *the Nutcracker* seems certain to be a part of Christmas for many years to come.



The end of the second act of George Balanchine’s The Nutcracker, performed by the New York City Ballet

D.A. IN PHOTOS

Sports Illustration by Eileen Lucarelli ‘27

