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## D.A. ALL DAY!

### *School in the City: Through the Eyes of a Freshman*

By Kayleen D. '29

It was a casual, windy, and slightly cloudy Thursday morning as everyone waited anxiously in the auditorium for our trip. We were heading to the American Museum of Natural History. As the trip leader, Dr. Serpagli explained the rules, assigned us our labs, and let us break up into groups of 10 or more. My friends and I immediately rushed to each other and everything seemed to be going well, until I lost my lab! We had just gotten them, so I had no clue why I had already lost mine. After receiving a new lab, I ended up finding my original one in the pocket of my bag where I could not directly see it. My friends and I laughed so hard about it just before we left for the trip.

Once we left, we trekked through Central Park, talking and being silly along the way. The wind had died down by the time we started walking, but it was still a bit cloudy from that morning. I made sure to take a lot of pictures along the way, especially because of the park's picturesque features, like the well-designed statues and lovely flowers. Once we emerged from the park and started heading towards the museum, the sun came shining through and the clouds cleared up, which, of course, prompted me to take more pictures. We wandered through different parts of the museum, such as the Hall of Biodiversity and Big Bang Theater.



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It felt very nostalgic, as my mom used to take me to the museum every weekend before Covid-19. As we traveled



through The Hall of Vertebrate Origins and the Wallach Orientation Center, our first two stops, we took many pictures, including ones of a cladogram, a type of evolutionary diagram, and the Titanosaur, that was spanned a large area of the room we were in. It was so large that my group and I had to find the perfect angle to only capture half of the dinosaur. We visited many other rooms, like the Hall of Gems and Minerals, the Hall of Human Origins, and the Hall of Pacific Peoples, where we found Dum Dum from Night at the Museum, took a selfie with Lucy, who was one of the very first known humans ever, and observed eye-catching and gorgeous gems. We strolled along to the Richard Gilder Center for Science, Education, and Innovation, a new building extension that was added to the museum! There, we learned many facts about bees and stood by the museum's giant honeycomb. We also learned about different animals and early extinctions in the Hall of

Biodiversity, but it was one of our last stops, so we had to rush our work in that exhibit. One highlight of our trip was the Big Bang Theater, where we watched a brief but cool show about the universe. The dome we watched it in made me feel a bit dizzy and uneasy, but the show itself was very interesting to watch.

Finally, we went to the huge gift shop, where we took funny photos together and bought some souvenirs before ending the day with one final photo with my group and leaving from the museum. Overall,



School in the City was an enriching experience, but also very meaningful. It reminded me of how beautiful and special New York City is and how it is sometimes overlooked and goes unnoticed by people like me who grew up in the city.

### *An Insightful Day at the MET*

By Paloma G. '28

On Thursday October 23rd, the sophomore class went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art as part of School in the City.



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We arrived at school at 8:25 A.M. and entered the auditorium where Ms. Cerulli and Ms. Oing presented a slideshow of some of the artifacts and art that we would see at the MET. Ms. Cerulli included items like a tombstone of a woman, a statue with a woman being pulled on a carriage by two lions, and many other artifacts made of different materials like stone, bronze, etc. When Ms. Cerulli explained the significance of these artifacts, there was always a deeper meaning behind them. For example, in the bronze statue of the woman being pulled by the carriage, she was carrying a drum, which signifies that the woman is the goddess Cybele. After being introduced to some of



the artifacts we would be seeing in the MET, Ms. Cerulli and Ms. Oing explained the assignment we had to complete. This assignment was a scavenger hunt around the MET where we had to find the artifacts that each question was talking about. There was also an extra credit challenge, in which whoever took the best and most creative photo at the MET won 5 points that would go toward their Latin grade. The pressure was on, and the extra credit assignment encouraged me to pay attention while at the MET and try to think creatively.

Before leaving the school, we were put into assigned groups. To get to the MET, we all walked along 5th Avenue. This was a scenic experience because we were able to see some of the fall hues in Central Park. The trees looked like they were taken straight out of a painting, with different shades of red, yellow, and brown. Once at the MET, a museum worker explained the rules to us and we regrouped with our chaperones. Finally, we began to explore the museum. While walking around, I was trying to take in all of the art. Everywhere I looked, there was a new artifact or painting that I had never seen before, despite going to the MET many times before. In my group, we did not answer the assigned questions in order. We went with whatever artifact we found first, no matter its sequence in the scavenger hunt packet. As we wrote in the worksheet about the artifacts that we found, we took as many pictures as we could, hoping that one would qualify for the extra credit. The extra credit was worth 5 points, so I was motivated to earn it.



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In the scavenger hunt packet, there was also a part where we could fill out a wishlist, which meant that we could pick out artifacts that we could want for ourselves. After we completed all of the scavenger hunt questions and finished filling out our wishlist, there was one last question that we had to complete. This question required us



to write about an artifact in Latin, which seemed like a difficult task. However, Ms. Oing and Ms. Cerulli were there to help us with any words we did not know. I ended up writing about a bowl with an image of horses and soldiers. It was interesting because it featured ancient depictions of a

war and had vibrant colors. Overall, going to the MET for School in the City was such an eye-opening experience. As I mentioned before, this was not my first time at the MET. However, this time it was different because I was aware of the backstory behind all of the artifacts, showing how valuable School in the City is for our education.

### *Wow! Is That Our Universe?*

Nora W. '27

The stars consumed me. While Pedro Pascal narrated, I watched as galaxies sped up and slowed down all around me. It was like looking through a telescope, but instead it was just my eyes following stars, constellations, and more!

On October 26th, the D.A. juniors celebrated first semester's School in the City at the Hayden Planetarium at the Museum of Natural History. With Mr. Ponce, we walked through Central Park and into a ginormous globe. I whispered to my friend that it reminded me of the Disney EPCOT ball.

I slouched into one of the comfy chairs and chatted with my friends, bracing myself for what I assumed would be a dull show. However, after the lights dimmed and the show began, I was in awe. For twenty-four minutes, I thought I was flying. I spotted galaxies with one or, unbelievably, two suns. There were hundreds of stars moving around on the vast screen. We witnessed many milestones that have shaped the Milky Way and experienced how these encounters will shape the future. Something that resonated with me was hearing Pascal describe the Andromeda Galaxy. Our galaxy



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is incredibly close to the Milky Way, and in four-and-a-half billion years, the Andromeda Galaxy will merge with our home galaxy. As a result, they will create a new galaxy, and our sun will gain a new orbit within it.

After the amazing Planetarium viewing, Ms. Rossi guided us toward some other exhibits in the museum. First, we visited the *Rose Center for Earth and Space*. We explored the section and learned about the development of black holes, which can form from monumental shifts in energy, and how scientists such as Albert Einstein and Thomas Newton created theories of gravity.

Next, we went to my personal favorite part of the museum: the *Gems and Minerals Hall*. I was astonished by the amount of shining crystals in the room. They came in a vast variety of shapes, sizes, and colors. My favorite crystal was called Calcite and Aragonite. On one hand, it looked like icy snow. At the same time, it resembled the shape of a coral reef.



Additionally, we peered into the jewelry

room, where many necklaces and earrings covered in sapphires and other expensive jewels sparkled.

Finally, we went into the *Extinct and Endangered: Insects in Peril* exhibit. Here, we observed photographs taken up close of many different species of insects. Personally, I found it incredibly interesting but also grotesque, as I was able to see every small detail about insects such as the hair on their bodies and their delicate wings. Despite being jarred by the insects' features, I realized that these miniscule creatures play a significant role in our environment and how many invasive species are affecting how these insects live. Then, we finished off our day, and I said goodbye to the Natural History Museum.

Each year, School in the City benefits D.A. students from all parts of New York and Connecticut. We get to see history and actively partake in this new knowledge. As D.A. says, this excursion makes us more well-rounded because we get to use the gifts around us to learn more about the world because a large sum of education comes from outside of the classroom. Thank you for this opportunity D.A., and I cannot wait for the next one!

### *Social Justice in All-Encompassing Media: A Riveting Journey Through Time*

By Sophie N. '26

Media moves the masses. Every advertisement, post, and article that pops up on our social media feed directly shapes



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how we think about or react to different beliefs or groups of people. The senior class' trip to the Paley Center For Media revealed that media is a calculated and ever-present force.

The lobby of the Paley Center bursts with energy. The entryway is packed with a million things to catch your eye, mirroring the multilayered spectacle that is media. From an exact replica of Michael Scott's desk to walls lined with pictures of celebrities, the Paley museum is the ultimate showcase of American pop culture. After a quick elevator ride, you are greeted with the stark contrast of a lecture room. The quiet auditorium is muted and sleek, as opposed to the eccentric exhibits of the floors below. From the moment you take your seat, it is certain that this School in the City carries a different tone from those of years before. While as an underclassman you focused on learning through scavenger hunts, staring at the stars, and interacting with art, this experience relies less on extravagant displays and more on the traditional sense of study. There is a reason for this sudden shift, as this is the life you will soon be living in the upcoming year. Engaging lectures are an integral part of college life, so what better time to get a glimpse than now!

At the heart of the discussion is how media, whether through snippets of news segments or confrontational interviews, can serve as a form of protest or a weapon of "mass distraction." This discussion hones in on three broad minority groups: African Americans, women, and the LGBTQ+ community, exploring how news sources

have either uplifted their voices or reinforced prejudice, with the overarching question being if someone should give up their identity to be accepted or if individuals should embrace their "otherness".

The interactive lecture featured discussions as well as snippets from news segments. Our journey begins with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, where you are placed in the middle of a sit-in. To peacefully demonstrate integration, African Americans are shown sitting at lunch counters designated for white people only. This protest causes quite a stir, and the press begins to cover the situation at the luncheonette. Interviewers ask these white patrons how they feel about this quiet rebellion, and they express a deep disgust with the act, claiming that Black protesters' harmless act of sitting and reading is disruptive and threatening. You notice how the interviewers only ask for the thoughts of the white customers, shunning the true motives and concerns of the protestors.

Next, you are taken to the Women's Rights Movement of the late '60s, placed at a protest against the Miss America contest. You are surprised that their protest is more relaxed than what you have heard in history class, especially since you realize that these women did not burn their bras, but rather removed their restraints and replaced their traditionally feminine clothing with garments that they feel comfortable wearing. The press arrives and interviews both the women protesting and men bordering the protest. The women explain that their purpose in canvassing is so that they can be



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free of men's beauty standards and live their lives on their own terms. The men complain that they should not ruin a treasured event because they are menstruating. It is frustrating that these valid causes are being diminished on live television.

Finally, you are transported to the Stonewall Riots of 1969, disarray and bloodshed surrounding you at every turn. This time, the press begins to converse with those spearheading these riots, and the protestors exclaim that their only intention is to be unapologetically unique, and not to indoctrinate or harm any other being. It brings you a sense of solace that minorities' concerns are starting to be heard without opposition.

You are brought back to the lecture hall, realizing that you have learned a lot more about life today than any other School in the City experience thus far. You now know that this lecture and journey is a capstone for everything that you have learned in your junior year. In Civil Rights, you understood the motives and tribulations of African Americans. In Christian Ethics, you were taught how to be an advocate through the See-Judge-Act hermeneutic. Through participating in the JAXPO fair, you practiced advocacy and researched systemic issues that were relevant and pressing to you.

As you are about to leave the auditorium, you look up for the first time. You notice the odd lighting fixture above you. It is oval shaped, but features the precise latitude and longitude of a world map. It draws you in, and you realize that it

is a humungous eye encapsulating the room. You now know that you are that eye, consuming, witnessing, and championing the voices you want to be heard.

### *Worried About the SAT? So Are We, but We Have You Covered!*

Katerina S. '27

As we all know, a high SAT score can be a helpful tool to get into competitive colleges. With this in mind, it is valid for high school students— in Dominican Academy and outside of it— to stress about the exam. However, there are ways to be prepared and feel confident in your schools to maximize your score and minimize your suffering.

Many students at D.A. are taking initiative in their SAT prep. Veronica A. '27 stated that she took advantage of the College Board practice tests. After determining which specific questions and topics she was weakest in, she used Khan Academy to hone in on them. The day before her October 4th SAT, a Friday, she studied briefly after school but went to bed early. She advises us to do as much practice as we can and try our hardest, but remember that it is *just* a test. To deal with stress, Veronica takes multiple breaks during her work, and refrains from doing a ton of work at once.

Orla B. '27, who took the October 4th SAT, shared that she started to prepare for the test at the end of August. Her routine was practicing every other day for approximately 45 minutes. She suggests splitting up math and English when taking practice tests to avoid feeling overwhelmed.



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She also recommends looking over your incorrect answers and fully understanding your mistakes. When taking a practice test, she recommends flagging confusing questions so you can check them over. Wisely, Orla mentions having a healthy level of stress. “Not caring is not good for you,” she reflected, “But the SAT should not take over your life.” Her advice goes out to juniors specifically, since they have an entire year to prepare, so it is not something to stress about.

Mara L. ‘27, took practice courses at the Princeton Review. She commented that while the course was very helpful, she had “2 pounds” of homework every night. The courseload taught her to be productive and accountable, and through the classes she acquired access to workbooks and other review resources.

Mariel R. ‘26, who scored in the top 4% of test takers, has a unique SAT experience. “I do not study in advance for anything, but I do not recommend anyone adopt that approach.” She admitted. She acknowledged the benefits of studying in advance; “You will be happier and get more sleep.” Considering that the DESMOS Online graphing calculator is accessible during the SAT now, Mariel recommends utilizing it as much as possible. “You would be surprised what Desmos can do for you,” she notes. She mentioned that she only did a practice test the day before she took the SAT, because she “lacked discipline” and found it difficult to fit in with all of her other commitments.

As a senior applying to colleges, she admits that it is a very stressful process, saying, “Honestly, it has been really difficult to manage.” She mentioned the mantra, *take it one day at a time*, as her stress relieving approach. She acknowledges that what she and other seniors are undertaking is a huge responsibility and a daunting task, so it is reasonable and normal to be uncertain. She reminds herself that while it is “rough” now, she knows it will be okay.

D.A. provided the Junior grade with a few free sessions with SAT Prep Instructing Company P.M. Gillen. We took a few practice SATs and learned a lot about the SAT and its significance. Additionally, D.A. often offers accommodations during stressful times. For instance, during finals and midterms, the school left a bin of stress balls for students to take and use. We have access to guidance counselors such as Ms. McGinley, who are always ready to listen and help students navigate difficult situations. Ms. Lawlor also reminds students that “I SAT is just one part of your college application. Many colleges remain test-optional..., so your grades, essays, extracurriculars, and letters of recommendation carry just as much weight –sometimes even more.” Also, our school offers after-school peer tutoring in the library, which can improve one’s skills in math, English, or other classes they struggle with. This is very helpful to tackle your weakest subjects and can be revolutionary in improving your SAT score.

Overall, the SAT is no different than any other academic exam. Luckily, our



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school prepares us well for the exam and provides us with opportunities to help. Our guidance counselors are experts in helping students manage time and succeed without overburdening themselves. At D.A., we are lucky to have many resources and should take advantage of them. Although being productive is important, taking time to de-stress in whichever ways work best for you, and keeping things in perspective of importance, is vital for success in academics and life in general.

### *Exploring Your Passion: The Club Fair*

By Elnaz M. 28'

More than just an event, the annual D.A. Club Fair is where students discover their passions and their community. The Club Fair gives students the opportunity to explore the many clubs D.A. has to offer. It is divided into two days: On the first it is open to the freshmen and sophomores. The next day, it is open to the Juniors and Seniors. This year, the auditorium and the MPR were filled with the chatter and enthusiasm of the many students who were finding clubs about which they were passionate. Some clubs even offered treats such as candy or stickers to encourage students to join.

Board members of every club at D.A. were quite busy presenting their club to the school, many making creative and unique posters to enlighten others about the club. Others shared captivating presentations with facts about their club. Their goal was to grab the attention of every student who

walked by. All of this effort was focused on making sure the club recruited enough new members to keep it strong for the whole school year.

This year, there were a few new clubs at D.A., such as Astronomy Club and Politalks. Astronomy club was started by Sabrina O. 26' after she spent the summer at the Yale Summer Program in Astrophysics. She conducted research and was inspired to start a club to share her zeal with other students. Politalks is a club for debating multiple aspects of politics and was founded by Madeline B. and Vivienne S. '26.

D.A. offers a wide variety of clubs for different interests. For instance, students who are interested in STEM may participate in clubs like Pre-Med, Psychology, Biochemistry, Engineering, or Math Club. These different clubs allow students to discover their own fondness and passions outside of the classroom. Additionally, they can meet new friends who share their interests. Clubs are also essential places where students learn how to lead and work as a team. They offer real chances to practice being organized and managing time, which are necessary skills for success after high school. Furthermore, they boost school spirit and make D.A. feel more like a real community for everyone.

As the secretary of the First-Generation Immigrant Youth Advocacy Club or FIYA, I personally experienced all the hard work and thought required to prepare for the Club Fair. I helped gather materials, find pictures of our club events, write key aspects of the club,



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and organize all the information into a poster. This, as well as being the secretary of FIYA, has made me realize how important clubs are to the D.A. community. The clubs are where students find a sense of belonging and connection. For our new members, FIYA offers insights that cannot be gained in a classroom. These clubs create a safe space where students can gain the confidence to share their own stories and goals.

Ultimately, the Club Fair helps students find friends who share similar interests and make a stronger community. Joining a club is a key way for students to explore their passions while learning crucial skills like leading a team and managing their time.

### *Breast Cancer Awareness*

By Lillian DiL '29

It is the morning of September 11, 2025, and there are several voices in your ears at once. As the clock reads 8:26 A.M., morning announcers call for a moment of silence in remembrance of events that took place twenty-four years ago. All commotion subsides, and a somber silence fills the room. On September 11, 2001, however, the world was anything but silent.

Upon the completion of their construction in 1973, the Twin Towers dominated the New York City skyline, being named the tallest buildings in the world and instantly becoming legendary. At 110 stories tall each, the iconic skyscrapers served as the workplaces for nearly fifty thousand people and housed 430 companies. This unparalleled recognition not only made the

North and South Towers central business complexes and notable tourist attractions, but also prime targets of terrorism.

In the early morning hours of September 11, 2001, individuals involved in the Islamic terrorist group known as al-Qaeda departed from three airports on four flights bound for California. Flight 11 was the first of the four flights to have been hijacked by the terrorists. At 8:46 A.M., American Airlines Flight 11 deliberately crashed into the first World Trade Center (the North Tower). From then on, indescribable terror unfolded, including the downing of the second World Trade Center tower and the hijacking of two more flights - one striking the Pentagon and the other (intended to attack the White House) foiled by brave passengers who gave their lives to save so many others.

Rescue efforts began in the hours following the attacks; search and rescue teams, first responders, and volunteers utilized unique technology and worked diligently in what became known as Ground Zero (the scene of the harrowing events). The attack on America had been brought to an end, but its lasting effects would be prominent in the years following.

A total of 2,996 people died in the monstrous events that took place in New York City, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001. Throughout the years following 9/11, Americans have sought to remember the day and honor the countless men and women that passed away through memorials, moments of silence, and educating younger



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generations. September 11, 2001 was a monumental day in our nation's history that demonstrates that while hatred and evil can have a tremendous impact, unity and love can conquer.

Like countless others, many here at D.A. have experienced the effects of this horrific tragedy, including our principal, Dr. Leslie Petit. Having lost several loved ones on September 11, 2001, Dr. Petit recounted the unparalleled devastation that occurred on that day.

The morning was initially mundane, she recalled; she was writing and sending emails when her computer froze and crashed. Puzzled, she searched for her husband, who was watching the news in disbelief of what was happening, and he described the events that were unfolding to her. "I immediately thought of my friends who had been working on Wall Street, as well as the firemen that I knew," Dr. Petit shared. As the day went by, phone calls that informed her of their deaths grew in number. "It was devastating. I was up all night, crying."

Despite the immense pain that came with the deaths of her beloved friends, she vowed to honor and never forget their memories. She participates in and donates to various foundations, namely the Tunnels to Towers Foundation and the Michael J. Armstrong Foundation, supporting the families of fallen first-responders and playing a role in preserving the remembrance of September 11.

Though the heartache and loss of that day was profound, Dr. Petit remains hopeful.

"I feel grateful for every day and it inspires me to cherish every moment." A powerful lesson for all of us.

### *The DA Halloween Homeroom Dance Party*

By Kayleen D. '29

Although homeroom is usually a brief and calm time for students before lunch, October 30th was an unexpected and fun surprise! As everyone talked about their costumes, halloween plans, and panicked about the upcoming biology test, we suddenly heard a ghostly and haunting voice over the loud speaker telling us to get ready for a "spooky Halloween dance." Everyone was perplexed. Out of nowhere, the theme from Ghostbusters starts blasting over the intercom. Everyone freaks out, including me, not because we were scared but because we had no clue what was going on! Then, in a shocking turn of events, Dominic, our mascot, and a bunch of students burst through the door and start dancing and jumping everywhere! The atmosphere quickly went from casual and quiet to bustling and ecstatic. Dominic and his crew left after only a few minutes. Confusion gave way to applause and amusement. Although it was such a small moment, it gave me a sense of joy and belonging at Dominican Academy. It reminded me that the D.A. community makes an impactful effort to find joy and excitement during school, even in the midst of loads of homework and rigorous studying.



*Kayleen D. and Elis F. - Freshmen*

### ***My Freshmen Yale Certamen Experience: A Celebration of Learning***

By Kayleen D. '29

As a girl whose dream school is Yale, the Yale Certamen 2025 was one of the most exciting trips of my life. Yale Certamen is a Latin-themed quizbowl covering history, grammar, and Roman life where middle school and high school students from all over America compete. I believe the highlight of my trip was simply the traveling itself. At first, I was really sleep-deprived, as we had to leave from D.A. for Connecticut at 7AM, which is when I usually wake up. Thus, my mom and I had to rush out of bed, quickly get ready, and hop in a cab before the bus left me. On the trip, with Ms. Cerulli and Ms. Oing leading it, I sat next to my best friend, Hazel, and we chatted for about half of the ride before I fell sound asleep. Everyone on the bus got to listen to their favorite songs

on a beautifully organized playlist Ms. Oing had made for us. As soon as we got there, I was more than ready to wreck my phone storage by taking loads of pictures. It felt like a dream come true! I was finally visiting the school of my dreams. Before Certamen started, we listened to Professor Noel Lenski, who specializes in classical society work, talked to us about mail and ancient travel, which, although unexpected, was quite interesting. Before we knew it, round one started! I got the very first question right and answered two more correctly. I felt very proud of myself, but then proceeded to not know any other answer whatsoever. We managed to get 45 points in the first round, and although not the highest score, we were really excited, especially because our freshmen team had never done a Latin competition before. We also got a bit distracted during the first round because there was a spider lurking over our heads, and as someone with arachnophobia, I was scared for my life!

In the second round, we received around 20 points, and in the third round, 10 points. We did not make it to the semi-finals, but to be honest, we were



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*Kayleen D. '29 and Hazel  
H. '29*

more focused on the fact we did better than expected. To celebrate, we ate at Shake Shack and went out for ice cream, getting ready to head back to New York. Overall, the experience was very enriching and meaningful, as we got to learn so many new aspects of how Romans lived and their mythological tales and stories. Despite the amount of studying we did and fast-paced practice competitions we did on the bus ride to Yale, if I had to relive one moment of my freshmen year, it would definitely be this trip.

### *The Secret to the D.A. Punch*

By Setareh B. '28

Every year, Dominican Academy hosts an open house for prospective students and their families. This year the open house fell on Saturday, October 18th. At around 10am, the first group of people began to walk through the doors. Some students appeared afraid, others excited. I on the other hand felt a sense of worry and concern, wondering what families would think about our school and if these students would be a good fit for our community, representing D.A.'s core values. Groups were greeted by faculty and student ambassadors. Prospective students received a Dominican Academy folder, which included a letter from Mrs. Checo, an application to do list, a copy of Veritas and an informational booklet. Families then headed up the historic D.A. red stairs, prepared to see what our school has to offer. To begin the day, families heard a prayer and welcome from Dr. Egler, followed by an introduction from our principal, Dr. Petite. Then, Admissions Director, Mrs. Checo spoke about vital application information. Next, Ms. Weil led the panelists in speaking about their favorite classes, commutes, workloads and a variety of other valuable information. Additionally, teachers were present to answer questions and speak briefly about class curricula. As these events were taking place in the auditorium, I couldn't help but wonder which of these



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girls would become future Dominican Academy tigers. Who would we share a school with? Would they represent the values of our community?

After groups spent time in the auditorium and heard from panelists, they were given a tour of the magnificent building in which our school is located. Tours were led by National Honors Society students and highlighted the significance of our building. Key stops included the library, labs and cafeteria. I can still remember the tour I was given when visiting Dominican Academy. It was led by a senior and I was amazed at the details of our building. I remember envisioning myself doing experiments in the wet lab, or completing homework in the library. Upon entering the cafeteria, families were greeted by student ambassadors and teachers. I scanned the looks on the students' faces, partially to try to decipher what they thought of our school, but also attempting to calm my own nerves. Not only were students present in the cafeteria, there was also a variety of food and beverages. Right in the center of the cafe stood D.A.'s traditional punch (which is actually sherbert and ginger ale). Despite its green hue, everyone enjoyed the great tasting punch. Families had time to mingle, snack, and ask any questions they may have had. Although some families had more or different questions than others, the most

common questions that students and their parents asked about were the amount of homework, language and advanced classes, as well as dance. People questioned the fact that we did not have an in school gym or gym class, but were met by immediate reassurance. I explained how upon attending Dominican Academy, I believed no gym class would be a negative, but once I started school I fell in love with dance class. The fact that we are able to spend an hour a week relaxing and expressing ourselves through dance, is something undeniably unique to our school. It is a time when we can feel comfortable in our bodies and learn entertaining new dances. On their way out, students were handed a cookie, and yes the big secret is out, black and white cookies are back! Many students were satisfied with how the day went, but even more were delighted with their cookies. Although the day may have been long and stressful, prospective students were able to gain a true insight into what life at D.A. is like, and the community that thrives at our school.

### *The Freshman Retreat*

Sarah C. '29

On Friday October 3rd, I joined the Class of 2029 in the gym at St. Johns Nepomucene Church for the annual Freshman Retreat. The theme of this year's retreat was The Summer I turned Pretty, the



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sensational TV series that has seeped into almost everyone's conversations or "For You" page. Principal Dr. Petit, as well as several upperclassmen, excitedly took to the stage to discuss DA's Four Pillars and their significance, extracting these guiding principles from scenes in the show. We then divided into smaller groups with two senior leaders to discuss our personal experiences with the elements of the Pillars.

I was running late, so my classmates had already gathered into their groups upon my arrival. Uncertain, I hung about the corner of the gym until Dr. Petit rushed towards me and guided me to a circle. A senior instantly moved to make room for me. I had not actually met most of the students in my group. I was surprised to learn that a girl I had previously defined only by silver jewelry and black loafers practiced my same prayer habits. In a setting where so much is determined by first impressions, it was comforting to discuss something as timeless as the pursuit of Veritas, prayer, community, and service. We ended the retreat by writing compliments for each person in our group on a starfish shaped paper (which represented the summer theme).

I had initially expected the freshman retreat to be like the silent treks on Bear Mountain that I had been on as a middle schooler. However, the personally decorated

gym that had hosted countless school sporting events created a familiar atmosphere where I was able to speak more naturally. This event opened a new meaning of "retreat" for me. It was a pause from daily life. It was a time to connect genuinely with my peers and leave with an attitude of acceptance. I ended that week with a fresh perspective that I hope to carry through my freshman year, shaping not only my school life, but also my outlook on the world.

### ARTS AND CULTURE

#### *Greco-Roman Pumpkin Painting: A Modern Twist on Classical Traditions*

By Mara L. '27

On Monday, October 20th, the Dominican Academy Classical Society hosted a new seasonal event: Pumpkin painting inspired by Greco-Roman vases. Everyone was invited to join as we mixed classic with modern Halloween traditions in a celebration of the beauty and practicality of the ancient art form. As the newly rebranded D.A. Classical Society (you may remember us as Certamen from previous years), we have been working to make the classics feel more engaging and are planning new and exciting events for this year. This celebration was one of our first big steps in that direction. We set up the cafeteria with ripe pumpkins and a variety of art supplies and started painting! Some people decorated their pumpkins to look like traditional



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pottery with black-figure patterns, while others portrayed popular mythological scenes or even put a modern spin on their designs.

The idea for the occasion came from the ancient art of Greek and Roman vase painting. Originating around the 8th century BC, the practice grew to become popular and iconic in the ancient world. Vases were used in both religious ceremonies and everyday life, often serving as containers for goods such as wine, oil, and grains. Although most people could afford painted vases since they were widely produced, only the wealthy could afford the most elaborate and detailed designs.

The paintings on these vases also told stories. Archaeologists and art historians still study these works today, analyzing the figures and scenes to uncover their cultural significance. A depiction of an ancient myth might express a moral message, while athletic scenes could show the ancient admiration for the ideal human form or be given as awards for contests such as the Panathenaic Festival of ancient Greece. Some vases even tell entire stories through one image, showing how much detail and meaning can fit into a single picture.

There were two common forms of vase painting in the ancient world: black-figure and red-figure. In black-figure painting, the motifs are painted black, while in red-figure painting, the designs are left the color of the clay and the background is painted black. Red-figure painting grew in popularity after its invention since it allowed

for more detailed precision, and it eventually replaced the black-figure method almost completely. Our pumpkin paintings are closer to the black-figure method, since we painted black designs onto a natural orange surface.

At the end of the gathering, we had a whole pumpkin patch of designs. There were depictions of mythological scenes, paintings inspired by famous vases, and even an ancient Roman Hello Kitty. Eileen L., a member of the club since Freshman year, reflected on the event, saying, “It was great to see so many people enthusiastic about pumpkin painting. I am happy that the Classics club is having more activities for students at club meets as it is a way to make new friends and have fun after school. I am proud of this club and can’t wait to see what it will do!”

Through our rebrand to the Dominican Academy Classical Society, the club hopes to broaden from just competition preparation to holding more culture-focused events. Currently, we have plans to participate in more Certamen competitions, possibly host our own competition at D.A., and lead another National Latin Exam review day before the test in spring. If you have any suggestions for future endeavours, we would love to hear them! We hope you enjoyed the event if you were able to make it, and we look forward to more people joining the Classics Society as we organize more fun classics-related activities for the rest of the year. Happy Halloween, omnes!



## *Halloween and Dia de los Muertos at D.A.*

By Eva F. '29

As a freshman at D.A., I have never experienced their unique Halloween traditions. But when I walk into the building I realize that almost overnight, the school has transformed. The basement turns into its very own haunted house, with decorations, courtesy of Mr. Frederick, making the space feel completely new. As we walked down the stairs into the darkness, my friends and I tried to hide behind each other for fear of being “jump scared.” One of us acted as a lookout down the hallway while the rest hurried to class, but our efforts were all for naught when a cloaked figure leaped at us from behind a door. More than a few people screamed in terror before bursting into laughter when we realized it was just Mr. Frederick. Still, we made sure to avoid the basement for the rest of the day.

Scary cloaked figures weren't the only ones to be found around the building. I was taught Latin by Mario and history by Princess Peach. During class, I spoke to bunnies, zombies, and football players about our Halloween plans, all while eating lollipops and various candies. In the hallway, we passed by the founding fathers themselves. Dominic the Tiger made a rare appearance during homeroom, while the Ghostbusters theme song blasted through the speakers, and we all had an impromptu dance party.

Even our classes reflected the Halloween spirit. In dance, we all learned the iconic “Thriller” dance, and tried our

best to do Micheal Jackson justice. In history, we learned about mummies and tombs in a special Halloween class, and Latin let us relax while watching a unique Latin play. As we left the building, excited for the festivities that would continue the next day, even more Halloween treats were passed out and enjoyed among the student body.

But at 3:00 p.m., another tradition was introduced into the spooky chaos. Students and teachers alike, guided by Ms. Gibilaro, began to set up the annual Dia de los Muertos “ofrenda” or offering in Spanish. Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a Hispanic holiday celebrated on November 1st and 2nd. Directly after Halloween, it also focuses on old spirits and skeletons, but for a very different reason. Throughout much of Latin America, Dia de los Muertos brings a lively celebration of remembrance and love as people come together to honor their departed family members. The grand festivals welcome back lost loved ones for a night or two of dancing, music, and reconnection. To celebrate, many families create ofrendas to honor their dearly departed, and D.A. participates in this historical tradition. In the lobby, a big ofrenda is put together, for the late family members of D.A. students and faculty. The altar is decorated with pan de muerto (bread of the dead), marigold flowers, candles, and little tokens to remember our loved ones. Every student gets the opportunity to bring a framed photo of any person they would like to include in the altar, and they are all honored throughout the month of November.



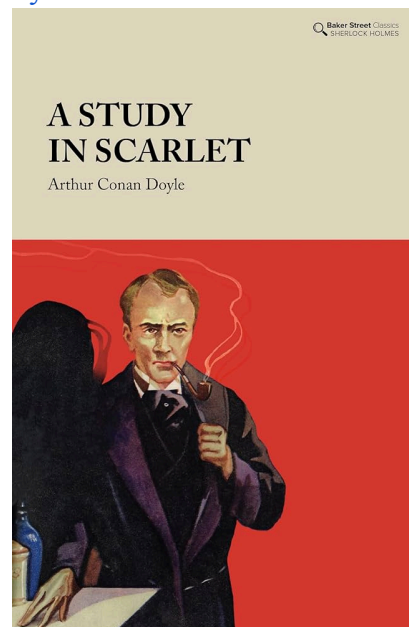
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The beautiful tradition was a direct contrast to the spooky holiday we had so far enjoyed, but the essence of it all remained true. This day has been one of my first introductions to the strong community featured at Dominican Academy. Say what you will about ghosts and monsters, throughout all of the scary features, I was reminded again and again of why this school is so special. It is in the way that teachers take time out of their days to dress up and create a fun class for their students. It is when Mr. Frederick spends his time in a dark basement just to make our Halloween memorable (although let's face it, he lives for this day), and when the faculty sit through five minutes of "Ghostbusters" for the students' enjoyment. And, most importantly, it is in the thoughtful and compassionate execution of familial traditions that allow us all to take the time to stop and remember why these holidays are important. I may be new to D.A., but it is days like these that show me why we all chose to be here.

## COLUMNS

### *Book Review: Investigation with Sherlock Holmes: A Study in Scarlet*

By Ana D. '26



Book of the Issue: *A Study in Scarlet* by Arthur Conan Doyle

Rating :

Hidden in the dusty classics section of the bookstore lies an entire world of forgotten masterpieces. *A Study in Scarlet* is surely one of them. Despite the multitude of TV shows, movies, and other remarkable novels that all take inspiration from Doyle's exceptional book, I must admit that I had only a basic understanding of the Sherlock Holmes adventures before reading it. However, I was charmed by a compelling story with extraordinary character building,



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despite the occasional antiquated British language.

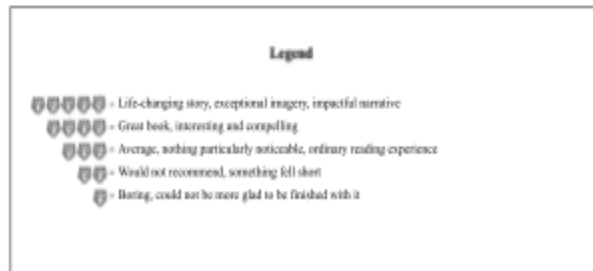
*A Study in Scarlet* is told through the narrative of Dr. Watson, an infirmiry surgeon who is traumatized by the horrors he had experienced in the Second Anglo-Afghan War, a military conflict between Great Britain and the Russian empire over influence of Asia and Africa in the late 1800s. After returning home to London wishing to find solace in the bustling city, he finds a most peculiar flatmate. Although at first unsure of Sherlock's profession, Dr. Watson becomes entranced by Sherlock's talents, comparing them to that of superhuman powers. Eventually, Dr. Watson stumbles into a classic Sherlock murder case which brings both the master investigator and his ordinary confidant to solve the case together.

But despite the triumph that became of Arthur Conan Doyle's series, he despised his creation. It was said that the Sherlock series was written entirely to please his publishers and make a quick dime off of "cheap fiction." Doyle resented the series so much that he eventually (spoiler alert) killed off his character later on in the series just to be rid of the publicity. Despite his resentment, Doyle later resurrected his famous character after being offered over a million dollars.

However many decades have past, Sherlock Holmes remains the most recognizable detective, even referenced during the recent Louvre robbery heist. If you are intrigued by mystery and wish to continue reading the Sherlock Holmes

series, the next novel in Doyle's series is: *The Sign of Four*. Happy Reading!

Let me know if you have any comments or book recommendations by emailing me at [adelgado2026@dominicanacademy.org](mailto:adelgado2026@dominicanacademy.org).



### ***The Ultimate Debate - Credit Card vs. Debit Card***

By Paloma G. '28

Have you ever used your parents credit card before? Have you heard them talking about paying the credit card bill? I am sure you know of credit cards and debit cards, but many people do not know the difference between them. Is a credit card free money? Why do people even have debit cards? In this article, I will answer all these questions and explain the benefits of a credit card versus debit card. Then, you can decide for yourself and pick which card you would rather use.

Let's start with a credit card. Essentially, a credit card is given to you by a bank that allows you to use money from the bank up to a set limit. A common misconception is that you have to pay interest fees on credit cards. With a credit



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card, you only have to pay the interest fee if you do not return the money you borrowed from the bank back before a certain due date. If you miss the due date, you will be charged interest on the money you spent using the credit card every day it is late. This interest accumulates, so it can get very expensive, very quickly, which is why it is crucial that you pay back your credit card expenses before the due date. If you go into debt with your credit card, it affects your credit score, which is a rating of how well you can manage your money. Your credit score is vital as it is how banks decide if they should approve loans and credit cards.

Now that we talked about the disadvantages, we can talk about the advantages. Credit cards have many benefits such as offering rewards in the form of points or miles every time you spend a set amount of money. This can be an effective way to save money as the points you earn can be used as currency to buy items from other companies. Another benefit of a credit card is if you have an emergency expense, it won't directly affect the money in your bank account. This means you have time to pay off the emergency cost. Additionally, most credit cards have a fraud protection system, so if your card gets stolen you will not have to pay any of the charges made by the person who stole your card. As you can see, a credit card has many favorable points but if you are irresponsible with money, a credit card may not be the best fit for you as you may find it hard to pay the money back in time.

So now that you know what a credit card is, let's take a look at debit cards. A debit card is directly linked to your bank account. This means that if you spend money, it will come from the money that you have in your account. Debit cards can be used to withdraw money in the form of cash from an ATM. Debit cards also have benefits, but there are less benefits compared to credit cards. With a debit card, you can only spend the money you have in your bank account so you can not go into debt, unlike a credit card. Additionally, with a debit card, banks do not have to check your credit score to see if you are eligible. This means that if your credit score is low, banks can still give you a debit card.

So in all, credit cards use money from banks which you have to pay back on a specific date and debit cards use money directly from your own bank account. If you are not good at handling money, I think a debit card may be better for you. But, if you can pay money back on a timely basis, I think you should get a credit card as it has more benefits. So, I gave you the information and I will now leave it up to you to decide - are you team credit card or team debit card?

***A Dash of Happiness and A Sprinkle of Gratitude- Thanksgiving Edition!***  
By Melissa B. '26

With Halloween come and gone and my huge candy stash dwindled to one piece of chocolate, my focus turns to Thanksgiving. As November approaches



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and the leaves begin to turn from green to shades of orange and red, my excitement for Thanksgiving grows bigger and bigger. Since I am the one-and-only writer of D.A.'s own *A Dash of Happiness and a Sprinkle of Gratitude*, of course, Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite holidays. The very thought of being with my whole family and enjoying the day together always fills me with joy. I dream of the intoxicating smell of freshly roasted turkey and salty gravy warming on the stove. The moment the calendar flipped to November, Thanksgiving was already circled in red.

But aside from eating obscene amounts of pumpkin pie and watching football with my cousin, uncle, and dad (and watching the players eat turkey after the game, one of my personal favorite traditions), Thanksgiving really is a day to reflect on all of the blessings we have received throughout the year. It seems like a cliché, but the age-old Thanksgiving question of “What are *you* thankful for this year?” really fits for this month. In light of that question, I interviewed the Sophomore class this month for this feature.

The first sophomore I interviewed was Antigone H. This month, she was grateful for her family and all the support they have given her. She was also thankful for her best friend, who has been by her side through thick and thin. I then asked two

Thanksgiving-specific questions. She was most excited to see her family and friends during this Thanksgiving break. And finally, for a more fun question, I asked what her favorite Thanksgiving meal is, to which she said mashed potatoes.

The second sophomore I interviewed was Katerina D. She said that this month she was most grateful for the love that God has put into her life through all her friends and family. She was most eager to see her brothers, who were coming back home from college, and to see the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Her favorite Thanksgiving meal was a classic- ham and sweet potato fries.

I will be back next month to report on your good news. Juniors, you're up next! Make sure to look out for my email with a link to submit your good news. I cannot wait to see your responses. I hope everyone's Thanksgiving is filled with glad times, warmth, and, of course, turkey! Make this coming Thanksgiving break brighter by taking some time to count all your blessings. Until then, make sure to add a dash of happiness and a sprinkle of gratitude to your life!

### *Ask Away, Tigers!*

By Mariel R. '26

“Ask Away Tigers!” is back! This issue's column was open to the entire student body. We received some excellent questions, so without further ado, let's answer them!



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Lillian Di L. asked:

**How can I better study a language, for example, the writing aspect of it?**

Great question! I think the best way to study the writing aspect of a language is application and practice. I am sure that while studying other subjects you've come to find that writing things down helps solidify them into your memory. I think that this is true for studying languages as well, especially if you are dealing with a language that has a different alphabet. If you want to practice often, one thing you could try is taking five minutes out of your day to write a quick summary of your day in the language you are studying. By doing this, you will get more comfortable expressing yourself in that language and your recall and writing it will improve. This strategy is something our Mandarin teacher Ms. Yang approves. When asked this question Ms. Yang responded that there are two aspects to learning a language: input (reading and listening) and output (speaking and writing). She says that through input you can establish your own writing system because you have the words to do so, and this leads to output by allowing you to express your ideas logically and talk to people. She believes that writing diaries in order

to engage in dialogue with yourself is the best way to practice the writing aspect of a language.

Another student asked:

**What are the best electives/APs to take?**

This is a tough question! I would say there is no clearcut answer to this because it is really dependent on the kind of person you are. This idea is something our junior and senior guidance counselor, Ms. Lawlor, seconds. She said that choosing which classes to take is a personal decision and it should be shaped by what makes you passionate. She explained that you should not do anything you are not passionate about and maybe consider what you want to study in college when making a decision.

Personally, I am definitely more of a humanities person than a STEM person, so I really enjoyed taking Intro to Art History and Civil Rights my junior year as opposed to AP Environmental Science or AP Chemistry. Similarly, my friends in those classes enjoyed taking them more than they would have enjoyed taking Intro to Art History or Civil Rights. I would do some soul-searching when course selection



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comes around to make the decision that is right for you, but I would be lying if I did not recommend Intro to Art History, it was a really interesting class!

Although there is no one answer to this question, I asked some other seniors which APs and electives were their favorites. Seniors Noreen W., Zosia K., Zoe B., and Isabella S. all mentioned Civil Rights, but some other popular answers were AP Psychology, AP Biology, and Body Mind.

All of this to say, it varies for everyone, but if you do the soul-searching necessary, you will make the decision that is right for you.

That's all for this issue tigers! If you have any questions you want answered, just keep your eyes peeled for an email from me in the future. Remember, there is no such thing as a stupid question and you always have the choice to remain anonymous. Till next time tigers!

### ***Hollywood-Style Theft at the Louvre Shocks World***

By Iris M.'27

On the morning of October 19th, masked thieves broke into the Apollo Gallery of the Louvre Museum in Paris, the most visited museum in the world. In just

seven minutes, the thieves stole over \$100 million worth of France's imperial jewels, including tiaras, brooches, earrings, and necklaces belonging to French Queens and Empresses. Today, investigators are hard at work to recover the stolen jewels and to identify and arrest all of the criminals involved with the heist.

Officials estimate that eight Napoleonic-era jewels stolen were collectively worth around \$102 million dollars. Many of the stolen items had belonged to Empress Eugénie, the wife of Napoleon III, including a tiara adorned with hundreds of rose-cut diamonds (vintage-style diamonds with domed and faceted tops), thousands of diamonds, and over 200 pearls; a decorative bow encrusted with nearly 2,500 diamonds; and a diamond brooch known as the "reliquary brooch." The thieves also attempted to steal Eugénie's golden eagle-adorned crown, but dropped it as they fled the museum. Also taken was a necklace made with over 30 large emeralds and over 1,100 diamonds, as well as a matching pair of emerald and diamond earrings that had been a wedding gift from Napoleon to his second wife, the Empress Marie-Louise. Three pieces - a tiara, necklace, and pair of earrings - from a set of jewelry set containing large Ceylon sapphires and diamonds were stolen, too. These jewels were likely worn by Empresses



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Hortense (mother of Napoleon III) and Marie-Amelie (wife of King Louis-Philippe I). French president Emmanuel Macron called the heist an “attack on a heritage that we cherish because it is our history.”

The heist was well planned. Four masked thieves disguised as construction workers approached the museum on motorized scooters around 9:30 a.m. Two waited below, and two climbed up a portable electric ladder they had parked outside the window of the Apollo Gallery. Once they had reached the balcony, the thieves used glass cutting tools to enter through a window, setting off alarms. Remaining nonviolent the entire time, they then smashed the display cases holding the jewels, setting off more alarms, and stuffed the loot into bags despite guards’ attempts to stop them. They escaped down the lift quickly, leaving behind many items including a circular saw, walkie talkie, and reflective vest, before fleeing aboard two motorized scooters. All visitors were evacuated after the theft, and the museum remained closed for three days. “It seems like a scenario out of a film or a television series,” said Central Paris’s mayor, Ariel Weil.

The theft succeeded largely because of a fault in the Louvre’s security system and initial failure of surrounding police to notice suspicious activity outside of the

museum. The outdoor security camera covering the area around the scene of the theft was pointed to the west of the Apollo Gallery’s balcony, shielding the thieves’ actions for the minutes before they actually entered the gallery. By the time police arrived at the scene, roughly three minutes after being called, the thieves had already escaped with the jewels. “What is certain is that we have failed,” said French Justice Minister Gérald Darmanin.

One of the reasons that the global public has been shocked by the heist is that the Louvre is one of the top museums in the world in terms of its collection. “The French people and the rest of the world feel shaken that the Louvre was not able to protect its treasure,” said Ms. Salfeld, D.A.’s art history teacher. She also explained that the museum’s inability to protect its artifacts and the fact that a heist was able to occur may discourage others from leaving art collections to the Louvre or other museums in the future.

Although the stolen items have still not been found, it is likely that the jewels will be or already have been broken down into their raw materials. The individual jewels from each item will then likely be sold through the black market or other channels. If this occurs, it will be impossible to recover the jewels in their original state, meaning that France will have lost priceless



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symbols of its royal history forever. According to Ms. Salfeld, “If they are disassembled, they will be worth much less than in their present state, since the historic value is lost.” Because the jewels are considered French historical artifacts and belonged to the museum, they are not insured privately, meaning the French government will not be reimbursed for the theft and will have lost the roughly \$100 million permanently.

While the jewels remain unaccounted for, three of the four main suspects in the heist have been taken into custody, and one suspected thief is still on the run. Two suspects - a 34-year-old man from Algeria arrested at Paris’s Charles de Gaulle Airport trying to flee the country, and a 39-year-old man who was already under judicial supervision for charges of

aggravated theft - were arrested a week after the heist and “partially admitted” to their charges. On October 29th, a 37-year-old man suspected to be one of the thieves and his 38-year-old girlfriend were arrested along with three other people who have since been released.

In just two weeks, global coverage of the heist has rapidly boosted it to pop culture stardom. Memes are appearing across social media platforms with people going as far as photoshopping the stolen jewels into photos of their Paris vacations. “Louvre robber” has quickly become a popular Halloween costume. “Nobody would have expected a heist in 2025,” said Ysabela S. ‘27. “They literally managed to steal good pieces within seven minutes in broad daylight so people laugh at how incompetent the security was.”



## D.A. IN PHOTOS

### *Halloween Classical Society Pumpkin Painting*

