
OCTOBER 2021 EDITION

The Scholars Newsletter

St. Thomas Aquinas Scholars Honors Program



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Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens

Social Chairs

The social chairs had an off-campus outing to the Minneapolis Sculpture Gardens on October 3rd. Students had the opportunity to walk through the Walker Art Center and see many interesting exhibits that were on display, such as Candice Lin's "Sleeping, Rotting, Resting, Weeping" exhibit which investigates the legacy of colonialism. The event was extremely fun, and we even saw the famous cherry on a spoon in the Sculpture Gardens!



Tree Planting

Service Chairs

For this event we had 15 students travel to Roseville Central Park to participate in the planting of 100 trees in the area. It was a great day outside, and we learned a lot about how to accurately plant trees. We went in small groups and used equipment to place the trees around the park.

Pizza with the Provost

Academic Chairs

The Academic Chairs and the E-Board teamed up to host Pizza with the Provost on October 5th. About 90 Scholars were able to attend, and we had the opportunity to hear from our new Provost, Dr. Rojas. After sharing his academic and personal story, Dr. Rojas asked for suggestions and feedback for future improvements to the Aquinas Scholars Program. A highlight of this event was learning that priority registration will be implemented for program members. A big thank you to Dr. Rojas for hearing and acting on the needs of the Aquinas Scholars Program!

Scholar Spotlight



Hannah Thatcher is this month's Scholar Spotlight!

She is a junior majoring in Mechanical Engineering and is involved in Society of Women Engineers (SWE), the club soccer team, and the badminton club. In the past, she has conducted research involving 3D printers and performing tests on various materials. She also held an internship at Biomerics this past summer, where she worked on the manufacturing engineering team and gained experience in the biomedical engineering industry.

Out of the honors classes she has taken, Hannah's favorite seminar is *Extreme Survival: Who Thrives, Who Dies, and Why*. She loved it because they got to learn about cool survival stories, hear from a participant in a survival TV show, and learn how to build fires and other helpful survival skills

Her advice to students in the program is to get involved in as many programs as possible so you can meet people from different disciplines and to take advantage of all the opportunities the honors program offers!

Sitting in a Tin Can

by Makayla Quinn

Glancing down, his eyes sweep across the cards in his hand. He smirks and leans back, the tilt of his neck causing the thick white mesh of his suit to crinkle and swish.

"Go fish."

The man sitting across from him, shorter in stature, passively reaches his hand up to grab another card. He used to like how zero gravity gave the cards a gracefulness, a flow not unlike a school of fish. Now they just remind him of his fate, silent bodies floating in the endless reaches of a dark, dark sea.

"Ey Rivera, got any eights? Oh c'mon man I know you do - I see it in your eyes!"

Rivera blinks slowly, handing over an eight of spades. He turns his head to the left and stares out the small, circular window. He sees what he always sees, the color no one from home could ever imagine. They thought Vanta Black was dark but this, this was so devoid of color it ached.

The first man sighs, placing his elbows on his thighs, and lets his cards slowly float back up. "You're no fun Rivera."

"I know. You told me this yesterday."

"Well yeah, it's cause I mean it! It's not like we're going anywhere. Live a little."

"Sure, let me just kick back my feet and we can play Old Maid or some other boring game you've remembered from college." Rivera sees himself in the reflection of the window, his frame is thinner than it was before they left. His cheeks are sunken, hollow. "This isn't a vacation Holiday."

Holiday shoots straight up, and takes a step towards his co-captain, his military-grade boots clanking with a start. "I can't help it Rivera! You want to waste the last moments we have left staring out this window an-and moping. I know it's hard man, but c'mon, you want this-", Holiday smashes his finger against the glass, "this, to be how you go out?"

Rivera looks Holiday straight in the eye. God, has he always looked this tired?
"Face the facts Holiday – it's how we both go out."

Holiday opens his mouth, then slowly closes it. His finger leaves an oily print on the glass, made ever so present by the endless void beyond. He stares at it. Silence fills around them, as it often does when they finish cards. Holiday does not wish to face his friend, does not wish to face any of this.

Rivera takes a deep breath and stands, plucking cards one by one and putting them in their metal case, snapping it back to the chrome table below.

"I used to read Sartre a lot before, before..." Rivera clears his throat. "Have you ever read Sartre?"

"You know I don't know who that is."

"Well, he wrote this play and people like it, I guess, but the whole point... the whole point is that he says Hell is other people, and, that's like the line, ya know?"

Holiday nods absentmindedly.

"But I disagree with him." Rivera looks at his hands, sees the muscle under his thumb twitch as he flexes them. "Hell would be facing this alone."

Staring past the smudge, Holiday tries to look for something to focus on, but he is only met with nothingness.

"Yeah. Yeah it would."

Autumn Achieved

by Jeffrey Davlin

Honey-dipped grain,
Fire-splashed boughs,
Frosty grey rain,
Brisk breeze blows.

Crisp apple Sun,
Crackle snap leaves,
Clear and deep calm,
Autumn Achieved.

Oh God Beyond All Praising

by Matthew Giorgio



You Tube Link: <https://youtu.be/GJZvwKNPVEE>

During quarantine last summer, I was bored and wanted to start a project to keep me occupied. I decided to try my hand at writing music, so I decided to write and record an acapella arrangement of "Oh God Beyond All Praising." It turned out to take a lot more work than I first thought, but it was a fun process, and I learned a lot!

Précis of Letter IX by Seneca

Anthony Moriarty

Seneca's primary point in Letter IX is that while a wise man may not need anything—friends in particular—to satisfy him, he may prefer to have such accommodations in his life so as to make virtue easier to practice.

Seneca starts his letter with the question of whether Epicurus is correct in his statement that the wise man is content with only himself and therefore has no need of friends. [All information is taken from Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, Trans. by Robin Campbell, Penguin Books, 1969. ISBN: 0140442103. (47-54)] Seneca begins by defining the difference between the wise Epicurean and the wise Stoic: the Stoic feels his troubles but does not allow them to affect his mindset while the Epicurean does not feel any of his trifles.

Using this distinction, Seneca brings an example of a Stoic who loses his hand at war: while the Stoic might not pine for his lost hand because he is content with what he has, he would have preferred not to lose his hand and would not purposefully place himself in situations that would cause him such loss. Similarly, while a Stoic might not prefer to lose a friend, he is content in not having one for the time since making a new friend is a virtue that should be practiced whenever the time presents itself, ensuring his talents of making friendships do not gain any rust.

Next, Seneca makes the distinction between the Epicurean who has friends for selfish reasons and the Stoic who has friends for selfless or virtuous reasons. The Epicurean has his friends for the selfish benefit of having someone to sit near his bedside when he is ill or in need of companionship whereas the Stoic has friends so that he might sit at his friend's bedside when his friend is ill or in need of companionship.

To the point of any lost friendship, Seneca believes that it is easy—and in fact more enjoyable—for a wise man to gain a new friend. He likens the gaining and building of a new friendship to that of a painter, explaining that the painter finds the most joy while he is painting while the finished painting does not grant the painter the same satisfaction. Likewise, a wise man will find more joy out of building a new friendship than keeping up an already existing one.

Finally, Seneca returns to the statement of the wise man being content with only himself and draws from Chrysippus, who said that the wise man lacks nothing but needs a great number of things in stark contrast to the fool who “needs nothing (for he does not know how to use anything) but lacks everything”.

In conclusion, Seneca believes that a wise man will be content with himself in a way that he will not pine after lost friends but will seek out friendship where he is able.

Attachment Issues

Carolyn Mueller

I can't stand to be alone. Every morning when I wake up, I see him. He is the first person I talk to; right when the alarm sounds, he's the first thing I grab. At night, he's the last one I see before I go to bed at night. He goes with me everywhere; he comes to my classes, club meetings, the dining hall, nights out, nights in, anything. Everywhere I look, he's there. I used to consider myself independent, but it is rare that he's not with me. I get scared that I am the odd-one-out, the only one with attachment issues. But then I open my eyes and look around. Everyone else has attachment issues too. I see him going with all of my friends, other students studying in the library, eating in the dining hall, hanging out at the bars. No one can escape him.

I have managed to escape him a handful of times, usually when I am on vacation out of the country, I am able to get away from him for those brief moments. When I do this, however, I feel as I miss so much of his life, that many events occurred that I couldn't like or share with him. But again, this isn't significant to me, it is everyone.

We are all attached to him... he is our friend and our enemy; he is our cellphone. I never thought I would say it, but we have attachment issues, to our phone.

Mushrooms on a Fall Day

Amal Abdel-Ghani



I was walking through a nearby park this fall and noticed these little mushrooms growing out of a small tree trunk that had fallen over. The mushrooms and moss were making their own little ecosystem in something that was once just a dead tree trunk lying on the grassy ground. The leaves on the trees were starting to change color and shed their dead leaves, but the mushrooms did not succumb to this same fate. They began to flourish in the chilly fall weather and make a home for themselves on the forest floor.

Upcoming Events

Check Canvas for more information

- Worry Stones for House of Charity
 - *November 9th*
- Movie Night
 - *November 12th, 7 pm*
- Feed My Starving Children
 - *November 20th, 11:30 am-1:15 pm*



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