

# Newspapers let students air concerns

By Sean McNamara  
Freelance writer

From news and sports to advice columns and editorials, high school newspapers are a cross section of teenage life, reflecting such diverse concerns and interests as drunk driving, school plays, student government and fiction-writing.

Seven student newspapers serve hundreds of students in the diocese's high schools.

At DeSales High School, all of the paper's editors are coincidentally in adviser Kathleen Scaglione-Theimer's Spanish class. Senior Nicole Acquilano, an editor, joined the staff because she likes to write and it gives her "an opportunity to cover different things."

Scaglione-Theimer last year helped launch the *Blazin' Saints* — the youngest of the diocesan high school papers — because "the need for a school paper was evident."

"We needed a means of documenting the events of our school days. We wanted something that would entertain us and carry us through a long school year," she said.

At first, DeSales students did not respect the paper, but that reception has changed, according to Acquilano. "Each issue has just gotten bigger and better. Now people really look forward to seeing it," she said.

After initially publishing a typeset *Blazin' Saints*, complete with pictures, the staff faced financial difficulties, and reverted to a ditto machine last fall. The paper, like other Catholic high school newspapers, is distributed free of charge.

"We do not charge the students for the paper. Our belief is that the paper belongs to them," Scaglione-Theimer said.

The paper's most-read section, according to Acquilano, is an advice column by Christine Hilliard and Christine Taney, titled "Dear Chris and Chris." The column responds to questions varying from "Is Santa real?" to "Is it proper to ask someone else's date to dance?"

Nazareth High School's *Gabriel* also features an advice column, written by co-editor Teknaya Watson, and titled "Teknaya Tells All." The column adopts a serious approach, advising students on such concerns as coping with the pressures of academic performance and relating to the parents of friends.

Sister Mary Anne Coughlin, SSJ, adviser to the *Gabriel*, said the paper serves the school by informing and teaching students. A former adviser to Cardinal Mooney High School's student newspaper with eight years' experience teaching journalism, Sister Coughlin has encouraged several of her students to continue their



Lorraine Hennessey-Graphic designer

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journalism studies in college.

In particular, Anita Tortorella, adviser to the *Aquinas Maroon and White*, believes that working on a student newspaper teaches responsibility, management skills, and adaptability.

Heading the *Maroon and White* staff has allowed Editor-in-Chief Dan Van Slyke to "have an impact on the school."

Van Slyke's impact was most telling when one of his editorials on last year's junior prom prompted *Aquinas* to make significant changes for this year's dance.

When student newspapers tackle controversial issues, they can face censorship from school officials. Since a 1988 U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing school officials to censor their school newspapers, many student papers across the country have faced increased scrutiny.

Faculty advisers routinely screen McQuaid Jesuit High School's *Lance*, be-

fore the paper is printed — a practice faculty advisers at other Catholic high school newspapers observe as well.

But the McQuaid *Lance's* editor, Mike Doser, said he welcomes faculty input, and does not view it as censorship.

Tortorella, who also reviews stories with the *Maroon and White* staff, sometimes

### *Aquinas Institute*

## Should illicit drugs be legalized?

**CHRISTINA MANCINI, senior:**  
No, they shouldn't because the alleged war on drugs can't work that way. It'll never get started.

**AILEEN MONTES, senior:**  
I don't think they should be legalized because they're hazardous to society. Legalizing drugs would increase their availability.

consults the school's administration on controversial stories. She said a story has never been rejected.

Sister Coughlin said that the experience of being edited and reviewed teaches students responsibility.

"Once they put their byline on top of their story, they have to accept the controversy that may come with it," she said.

## AS TEENS SEE

**TIM CIAVARRI, senior:**  
No. I would say if the government legalizes drugs, they would be hypocritical. You have Bush saying his war on drugs on the one hand. You won't be solving any problem, you'll be creating a bigger one. You'll have more drug users ... because you can't arrest them.

**ANDRE TURNER, junior:**  
No. They shouldn't be legalized because they're harmful to your body. If (drugs) were made legal, you'd have a whole lot of people using drugs ... and it would bring down the image of America. Our future will be stoned.

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