

# AQ play explores issues, pressures of teen dating

By Barbara Ann Homick  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — As the curtain goes up on Aquinas Institute's production of "Personal Effects," Kevin Mallory (played by Jeff Schmitt) nervously paces around his living room as his friend, Artie Van Wyck (Dave LaDue), tries to read a magazine.

At the beginning of the performance — which received the Best Show Award during the Third Annual Monroe County High School One-Act Play Festival at Aquinas — the two high school students are planning a party at Kevin's house since his parents are gone for the evening.

As Kevin nervously anticipates the arrival of his date, Eileen Sorenson (Caroline Elliott), another one of his buddies, Bill Simpson (Jeff Welch), arrives and teases Kevin about his terrible luck with girls.

Artie and Bill leave when Eileen arrives, leaving Kevin tongue tied and twisted. Soon Artie returns with his girlfriend, Mary Ann Cassaldo (Amy Brien), but it's obvious the two are involved in a fight.

The audience soon discovers that Artie and Mary Ann — who have been dating for more than a year — are fighting about college. Mary Ann is upset because Artie is applying to colleges — such as Harvard and Princeton — that she can't afford to attend. When Artie shows indifference to Mary Ann's concerns, she says she wants to end the relationship and storms out of the house.

Artie doesn't want Kevin and Eileen to think that he is a "wimp," so he tells them he is not going to run after Mary Ann — as he heads out the door. Soon after that transpires, the nervous tension between Kevin

and Eileen gets so high that she leaves.

After Eileen's exit, Kevin's friends return to the house, but Kevin doesn't want to admit to them that he blew it with his date. So he pretends to call Eileen on the phone to talk things over, but the guys discover that Eileen isn't on the other end of the line when she reappears at the door.

When Kevin sees her he grabs her and passionately kisses her. After he "asks" his friends to leave, he appears to have overcome his nervousness. He and Eileen settle on the couch for another kiss as the curtain falls.

Schmitt, Brien, LaDue and Ann Marie Feeley (the girl at Burger King) agreed that even though they enjoyed acting in the production by John McNamara, parts of the comedy were unrealistic.

For instance, Schmitt noted that he can't imagine any guy being as nervous as Kevin before a date.

"I don't know too many guys who are that uptight, but I could see two people sitting around on a first date not knowing what to talk about," said Schmitt, who won the Best Actor Award at the festival.

Schmitt said it was challenging to portray Kevin because he is nothing like the play's character in real life.

"I didn't think I was anything like Kevin because he was kind of a geek," said Schmitt, who had the title role in Aquinas' fall production of The Elephant Man. "I hated trying to cut loose with a character, but be that uptight at the same time."

Amy Brien said she loved her role. "It was the first time I got to play an angry character on stage," said Brien, who utilized emotions she has experienced with her boyfriend of four years for her character.

Brien noted that deciding where to go to college can cause serious problems for a high school couple, just as it did for Mary Ann and Artie. According to Brien, the biggest difference between herself and her character was that Mary Ann's love for Artie made her want to go away to college with him. Brien said she would never think that way.

"It depends on the person, but usually if you don't break up before you go away to college, you break up the first time you come home from school," said Brien, who won Best Supporting Actress in the play fest. "You find you need time away from that person."

In general, LaDue said he could relate to Artie. When it came to feelings about ending a relationship before college,

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Babette G. Augustin/Staff photographer  
Kevin Mallory (played by Jeff Schmitt) and Eileen Sorenson (Caroline Elliott) kiss during the final moments of *Personal Effects*, Aquinas Institute's winning production from the Third Annual Monroe County High School One-Act Play Festival, Feb. 2-3.



Mary Ann Cassaldo (Amy Brien) pushes boyfriend Artie Van Wyck (David LaDue) during a quarrel.

## Schools earn awards for dramatic feats

ROCHESTER — In its second consecutive year of hosting the Third Annual Monroe County High School One-Act Play Festival, Aquinas Institute's Dramatic Arts Department garnered three awards.

Drama departments from eight high schools — Aquinas, Bishop Kearney, Our Lady of Mercy, McQuaid, Irondequoit, Allendale Columbia, Fairport and Wilson Magnet — participated in the two-day festival on Feb. 2-3.

In addition to the three awards won by Aquinas, Bishop Kearney, McQuaid, Our Lady of Mercy and Allendale Columbia also took honors at the play festival.

Students from Our Lady of Mercy earned the award for Second Best Production for their production of "Catholic School Girl Rites." Kelly Lang was named Best Actress in her role as Jessica, and Erin Claire Madden earned the Second Best Supporting Ac-

ress for her portrayal of Milly.

In Kearney's production of "The Diary of Adam and Eve" by Mark Twain, Bradley Schaeffer earned the honor of Second Best Supporting Actor for his comedic portrayal of a dodo bird and an ostrich.

Rick Staropoli was named Second Best Actor for his representation of Follial the Clown, in McQuaid's presentation of "Escorial."

Allendale Columbia's Mike Crews earned the honor for Best Supporting Actor in his role as Green, and Emma McLaughlin's depiction of Pat won her the award for Second Best Actress.

Former WOKR-TV 13 anchorman Dick Burt presented the awards. Vicki Duval, director of education for GeVa Theater, John Haldoupis, artistic director for Blackfriars Theater, and Lindsey Korth, assistant professor of acting and directing at Nazareth College, served as judges.

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