

The Mount's Caffeine Conundrum: A Clutch or a Crutch?

The Mount Michael community is no stranger to caffeine consumption. This is true for all members of the school, whether students, teachers, or administrators who all enjoy a delicious sip of coffee or a refreshing energy drink of their choice.

One student in particular, senior Thomas Moseman, is known for having a Monster Energy in hand daily. "It helps if you're active doing sports or something," Moseman said. Energy drinks are generally considered unhealthy, but if you do drink them, it is beneficial to use them in conjunction with athletic activities. Moseman said, "I usually have one energy drink a day, unless I have to drive late at night, then I might have another.

Another student known for his caffeine consumption is sophomore Nathan Burrell. Burrell's favorite drink is Sour Strips Ghost." I have one in the morning, and I struggle to stay awake in class, so it helps me a lot." Whether it's coffee or energy drinks, daily caffeine intake can be an expensive habit, from \$12 coffees from Starbucks to \$4-8 a day for energy drinks. Burrell said, "I did No Ghost November, and that went well. I got through the entire month without drinking any, and after the month ended, I didn't feel the need to drink them. I used to drink coffee, but I just got tired of it, and the flavors of energy drinks are a lot better in my opinion."

According to the Mayo Clinic there are side effects to constant caffeine use, like irregular heartbeat, trembling hands, and other long-term side effects. One person who knows the extent of caffeine consumption is school librarian Ms. Katy Jenner. Jenner is positioned in front of the coffee machine, and this makes her the perfect observer of the school's caffeine consumption. Jenner stated, "Some of the faculty are particular about their coffee, but others don't care and will just get black coffee; however, the majority of faculty drink coffee." Jenner herself prefers homemade coffee or a Monster Energy drink. Jenner said, "Mr. Linder, Mr. Schuttler, Mrs. Sedlacek, and Mr. Mackerprang are probably the most frequent visitors to the coffee machine."

Caffeine is a staple of any workplace, and it is no different at Mount Michael, whether it be a scalding hot cup of joe or a cold caffeinated beverage. For better or worse, there is no question that caffeine is here to stay.

Modern Additions to War Ball Tradition Bring Fresh Results

For over half a century, Mount Michael has celebrated one of its most recognizable traditions: the annual War Ball tournament. Known for its competitive energy and enthusiastic student turnout, War Ball has long been a staple of the school's student activities. While the tournament continued this year, several changes to organization, rules, and overall encouragement made the 2026 event noticeably different from previous years.

As Nathan Mullin '26 put it, "War Ball is a famous tradition at Mount Michael that has been passed on for every single year that anyone I know has been a student." War-ball is a game unique to Mount Michael and is comparable to dodgeball, though it includes several important differences. As the game progresses, new boundaries may be introduced. Players are allowed to pass slightly over the half-court line, encouraging more confrontation between players. Play can also be expanded to the three-point line. In the final stages, the boundaries may expand to full-court play, creating a free-for-all environment for remaining players. The rules of the game evolved to be what they are today over the years between 1967 and the early 2000s when it was just a tradition at Camp Mount Michael during the summer. It later became the Catholic Schools Week and Homecoming Week tradition it is today, sporting the modern rules students are familiar with, barring the changes made this year.

Several rule adjustments influenced gameplay throughout the tournament, including an increase in the number of referees and more surveillance of the eliminated students. Dean of Students Mr. Tyler Linder explained, "Working directly with Mrs. Schleimer and the student council... we agreed on some established rules, how they would be enforced, the timeframe and all the things... All meant to curtail any deviant behavior."

This year, War Ball was held on the evening of Jan. 28, the Wednesday of Catholic Schools Week. One of the most notable outcomes of this year's tournament was the freshman class defeating the seniors. Traditionally, seniors have performed well in War Ball due to experience. Mullin said, "[War Ball] is part of the most exciting thing that happens during Catholic Schools Week, and its especially exciting for the seniors who get the grand opportunity, generally, to crush their underclassmen every single year."

This year, however, the number of freshmen who attended well outnumbered the seniors. Despite the long history of seniors dominating their first match against freshmen, the freshmen

persisted and defeated the senior class in a nail-biting showdown between Bennett Sailer '29 and Brady Quinlivan '26.

Though this year the seniors did not crush any underclassmen, the juniors certainly did. After obliterating the sophomore class in an intense round, they went on to humble the freshmen. This year was the first tournament in years that the junior class has won, finally usurping the long-held senior streak. The juniors were nothing short of ecstatic to experience their win.

Following the conclusion of the tournament, discussion turned toward the future of War Ball. Some students and staff have mentioned the possibility of another War Ball event later in the year, though no official plans have been announced. While this year's War-ball tournament differed from those in previous years, it remained a central part of Catholic Schools Week and a strong Mount Michael tradition. Linder said, "I'm not opposed to my deans having more War-ball nights, like an intramural type thing... maybe not even class versus class, maybe day student versus boarders. Mixing it up more in that regard. I think the more frequently we do it, it can still be competitive, but it won't be as crazy as it has been in the past."

With over fifty years of history and continued student interest, War Ball continues to adapt while maintaining its role as one of the school's most well-known events. The future of War Ball is changing, but one thing is certain- War Ball is not leaving anytime soon. As of now, it appears that Mount Michael will continue to build on decades of tradition in fresh and interesting ways.

Sweet Relief: Boostore Serves as Favorite Snack Stop

The Mount Michael Bookstore, located in the basement of the Benedict Building, is a staple in The Mount's snacking culture. From handing out candy for the Joke of the Day to selling small treats, the Bookstore is something Mount Michael students constantly rely on to pick them up throughout the day.

In addition to school supplies and clothing, the Bookstore has a selection of candies, chips, drinks, and other healthier snacks for the students to buy. The best-selling food items are Airheads and Pop-Tarts, and the most commonly bought drink is Propel. The Bookstore also has many other popular snacks. Grant Kreikemeier said, "I have Pringles and Oatmeal Creme Pies every day." He added that the Bookstore is a highlight of his day, and he has already spent "a bit over \$200" at the Bookstore.

The Bookstore also sponsors doughnut and cookie sales. On most Mondays, Mrs. Sarah Moline (mother to Ethan '25 and Liam '27) brings 96 Krispy Kreme doughnuts to sell in the Atrium. Likewise, Mrs. Sarah Torczon (mother to Wyatt '22, Cody '25, and Gavin '27) brings 84 Eileen's Cookies on Wednesdays.

Lunchtime is the peak hour for the Bookstore. After finishing their food, students often head down to the Bookstore to grab a small treat or guess the Joke of the Day. The Joke of the Day is an easy joke or riddle that the students try to guess the answer for a small prize. Making an attempt gets them a small piece of candy from one basket and getting it correct gets students a second piece of candy from a basket with a better selection.

Working the Bookstore are Mrs. Emily Coldiron (mother to Nick '24) and Mrs. Shelly Rodgers (mother to Matthew '24 and Michael '25). Every day they come to work with a smile on their face, ready to brighten students' days. Freshman Truman Snyder said his favorite part about the Bookstore is "The hospitality of the Bookstore ladies. They are so nice...they made me feel welcome here."

Mrs. Coldiron herself says her favorite part of working at the Bookstore is "interacting with the students and watching them develop from freshman to seniors and become ready to go out into the world."

The Bookstore is an essential part of the Mount Michael students' day and keeps them energized. The Bookstore never fails to give students a sweet treat, a smile on their face, or a place to laugh. It is a cornerstone of community that students, staff, and families gather around and love.