



NIKKI WESLEY / OAKVILLE BEAVER

SCHOOL PLAY: Sally Nakazi, Carlos Sulpizio, Sam Pollock and Michael Caccamo prepare for St. Ignatius of Loyola Catholic Secondary School's presentation of *You Can't Take it With You* on May 13 and May 14 at 7 p.m. The play is a comedy and is set in the 1930s, with a young couple on the verge of getting married. However, their families have disrupted the natural flow of the engagement. The cast of 19 have been rehearsing productively since last fall. The show runs at the school, located at 1550 Nottinghill Gate. Tickets will be sold at the end of April for \$10 each.

Improv group has strong track record

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This year's team placed third at the zone finals held at Abbey Park High School in Oakville in February. There were 11 teams participating in that event from Halton and Peel.

The third-place finish earned them a spot at the regionals, which were held in early March in Toronto. There, the ante was higher, with 55 teams vying to place in the top three. The team solidified at this event and went home with the gold medal.

"A couple practices previous we were playing fairly well, but that night the team came together and worked as a unit," said Glas.

Gilgan agreed that it was truly a team effort.

"Everyone, even if they weren't speaking right at the front and saying something, was contributing in some way," he said.

While the OT improv team was hoping for the best, the chance to perform again was more important than the colour of the medal.

"We don't really think about it (winning)," said Glas. "A lot of the time it isn't the place we come in. It is the idea that if you place first, second or third that night, you will play again. You just want to play again so much."

While some people think the key to improv is being funny, the students stress the heart of the art is living in the moment. The humour will flow from there, they say.

"The hilarity of a scene can come out of simple little things," said Glas. "If you aren't trying to be funny and you are in character, the most hilarious things can happen on stage."

Despite the high stakes, it is anything but a dog-eat-dog atmosphere at the events. The students say there is only friendly competition between various teams.

"Really, one of the huge differences between this and sports is that while this is a competition, it doesn't feel like it," Gilgan said. "You're going to cheer just as loud for every other team and flip out when a team does a great scene. Our zone, in particular, is very close."

Despite beating out 54 other teams at regionals, the competition is expected to be even tougher at nationals, which run from April 14-19.

The OT improv team is scheduled to perform the evening of April 14. If they do well, they will be invited back to perform at the final night. In the meantime, the students will spend their days taking part in workshops and watching other troupes take the stage.

Although OT has gained substantial success at the event over past years, members say there are still students at their school who don't know anything about the team.

However, word is starting to spread throughout the halls. The

two students joke they aren't signing autographs or kissing babies just yet, but they do have a few fans.

"I think a lot of them don't even know what is going on," said Gilgan. "But once people see it, they really like it and want to come back again. Unlike previous years, we have kind of a group of people who keep coming out."

Muzzatti said coaching the team is an immense amount of work, but she plans on keeping it going for years to come due to the dedication of her students and her satisfaction in seeing the growth of team members.

"It is my life outside of my home and the classroom," she said. "I would love for it to continue. It builds self-esteem and confidence in ways that no classroom can."

Her dedication to the improv team, in turn, means a lot to her students.

"There's no feeling of stress from Muzzatti when we are going on stage," Glas said. "She supports us no matter how we perform."

Gilgan said being part of the OT improv team has been the best part of his high school experience.

He added that he has learned several life lessons from being on stage.

"If you can find yourself comfortable on stage doing a scene in front of people from your own head, you're never really going to be uncomfortable in any other scenario," he said.

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