NEA's Read Across America Celebrated at Sts. Peter & Paul School

March 2, 2007
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Welcome to the third edition of the Salesian Beacon. It is hard to imagine that we are coming to the close of another school year. Time certainly marches on. Saints Peter and Paul Salesian School has had a wonderful and productive academic school year. Our students have worked diligently to absorb the curriculum and expand their knowledge base. Our eighth graders have gone through the high school application process and have received their acceptance letters. We are pleased to announce that our students were accepted to the finest high schools in San Francisco. In keeping with our tradition a great number of our graduates will be attending Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory. They are eager to become the “Fighting Irish.” We also have students accepted at Saint Ignatius, Stuart Hall, Mercy, Riordan, Lowell and several other private and public schools. We are proud of our graduating eighth graders and wish them every success and happiness as they embark on the journey to high school.

Our dear Pastor Father John Malloy, S.D.B. has come to the end of his term here at Saints Peter and Paul School. Father Malloy has been a wonderful and wise leader of our spiritual community. He has been a true friend to our school and has helped us to raise scholarship dollars for Catholic students who cannot afford to attend our school without tuition assistance. We will miss Father Malloy and his leadership. We will always remember his devotion to our community. Father Malloy was responsible for overseeing many needed renovations to our Church. The Church has never looked more beautiful! His loving devotion to our Church is visible to all who enter.

As the saying goes, “one door closes and another opens.” We await the arrival of our new Pastor, Father John Itzaina. Father has most recently served as the President of Saint Francis High School in Watsonville. We welcome him to our community and look forward to working with him on many Salesian projects. We are certain that he will enjoy Saints Peter and Paul Parish and School communities. We know that he will be very busy as there is never a dull moment here in North Beach.

As you read the Beacon, we hope that you get a sense of the remarkable community we have here at Saints Peter and Paul School. We have been serving the community since 1925 and we hope to continue our mission for many decades to come. We welcome your support of our school programs and hope that you will keep in touch with us throughout the years. If you are in contact with other alumni from our school, please ask them to send us their information so that they can be added to our alumni list. Please help us to continue to be available to students in our community who want a Catholic education. Your support can make this possible for many children who will benefit from our excellent program.

Enjoy our newsletter and feel free to share it with family and friends.

We look forward to hearing from you. If you have news that you would like us to share in our next addition, please forward the information to us so that we can include it in our next issue of the Beacon.

Best Regards,

Dr. Lisa Harris
Principal
Dear Friends,

I have always been impressed with the zeal of our school parents. Their attendance at school activities has always been a joy to behold. They love the school as I do and the reasons are, I believe, easily apparent.

The joy of our school children is plain to see. Of course, there are moments of woe, but generally speaking their laughter and smiles are infectious and that makes for a happy mixture of parents, kids and teachers. We have a great school!

We also have an interesting ethnic mix. More than a dozen different national origins are listed for our school children—truly a melting pot. This blending of personalities and traits is made evident at our school performances, where much talent is displayed.

But, it is becoming more and more difficult to support the many classes and activities that keep a school going today. We need the continued support of parents and friends to keep operational.

Thank you for help given, and hopefully, promises of help to come.

May our spirit of love and respect, with the help of God and our Patrons, keep us ever a happy family for the good of our children.

- Fr. John Malloy, S.D.B.

The Salesian Magician at Saints Peter and Paul
By Sr. Rachel Crotti, FMA

Like magic, Salesian Father Silvio Mantelli of worldwide Mago Sales (Salesian Magician) fame, was at SSPP from October to November this school year. He came from Italy to practice his English and the third graders enjoyed having him in class several times. The Mago Sales website has many photos of where Fr. Silvio has been with his campaign to rid the world of child involvement in war—one gun at a time. At his spectacular magic shows, Mago Sales gives a magic-wand to every child who gives him his/her toy gun in return. Even Pope Benedict XVI has recently blessed Father’s efforts publicly. Fr. Silvio says that he is a magician as Don Bosco was—to bring young people to Jesus, the cause of all joy. “My mission as a Salesian is to make children smile,” says Mago Sales. “When I do my magic show, I see wonder in the children’s eyes and joy in their faces. The children’s smiles make it all worth while.”

On October 23, Mago Sales performed for us and we were thrilled. As the SSPP Salesian School family, we had no toy guns to trade-in but each family instead was asked to make a donation of good will to the Salesian Sisters Mission. As Fr. Silvio Mantelli left to return to Italy, we contributed nearly $800 to the Missions. This was indeed the magic of giving and it brought us all great joy. God’s blessings upon you, Mago Sales, for reminding us of the magic of a smile and the magic of generous giving.
Lamplighters Music Theatre
By Sandy Wayne

In April, the Lamplighter’s Music Theatre came to Saints Peter and Paul’s to present “A Blast from the Past,” using the music and story of H. M. S. Pin-afore to provide a look at how, in the works of Gilbert and Sullivan, language and music are woven together to create some of the greatest works of musical theatre in the English language. Saints Peter and Paul students participated in the presentation with the professionals from Lamplighters. We enjoyed a great performance.

On November 29, 2006, Saints Peter and Paul students had the opportunity to participate in the San Francisco Opera’s production of “The Barber of Seville.” San Francisco Opera Company presented the opera right here on our stage. Several eighth graders performed along with the professionals: Michael McDonald starred as Bartolo, Jolina Lau starred as Berta, Sam Caine starred as Basilio, Alexis Ordoña starred as the lawyer, and Chandler Williams, Alibrando Petrini, Kevin Lee, and Jenna Gebhardt participated as footmen, policemen, and stagehands. Our eighth graders gave an outstanding performance and acted like true professionals. The entire school attended the performance and our students were very impressed. For most of our students, this performance was a first encounter with opera. I am sure that many of our students will be looking at classical opera as a very enjoyable art form after this experience.

The Barber of Seville
By Sandy Wayne, Teacher

On Saturday, February 10, the Salesian Family and friends of Saints Peter and Paul School had a blast welcoming in the Year of the Pig at the Far East Cafe in Chinatown. This event was not to be missed! There was virtually a sell-out crowd with 500 guests dining on a delicious 10 course banquet. For those who thought they might go hungry, a whole roast pig was the appetizer! Volunteers worked endlessly for months and days to make a truly spectacular event and feedback has been overwhelming. This affair included a well rounded floor show beginning with the marvelous lion dance followed by numerous choral, dance, and martial arts demonstrations to delight and thrill the audience. Father Malloy gave a blessing. Complimentary wine flowed during the silent auction for the enjoyment of those shopping; a few selected items were live auctioned and together they brought financial rewards for the school.

Having the children and families together to welcome the Lunar New Year was truly the focus of the event because togetherness ensures a prosperous New Year! A great time was had by all!
A Tribute to Christine Johnston

By now you all know that our dearly beloved teacher Mrs. Johnston will be retiring in June. Mrs. Johnston has been on staff at Saints Peter and Paul School for thirteen years. She has shared the wisdom that she has gathered after working as an educator for many years. The dedication and joy that she exudes is ever evident as she interacts with her students, the parents, her Choir and her faculty.

You all know that Saints Peter and Paul is more than a school. We are a faith community and we share many aspects of our lives with one another. Christine Johnston has a passion for music and she has generously and graciously shared her passion with our community. Our liturgical experiences have been enhanced by her willingness to provide music for the services. She has also given up much of her free time during the school days to train and rehearse the Choir.

We view the creation of the school Choir as Christine’s legacy to Saints Peter and Paul School. We cherish her Choir and hope to carry on her awesome work into the future. It has been both my pleasure and my honor to work beside this fine educator and wonderful woman.

Although it is with a heavy heart that we say farewell, we wish Christine every blessing in the new phase of her life called “retirement.”

With Gratitude,
Dr. Lisa Harris
Principal

In May 1994 I arrived to interview for the position of Music Teacher at Sts. Peter and Paul. I left that afternoon, mulling the possibility of teaching 5th grade as well as Music. (Wow! I could stay in one classroom most of the day!) I was impressed by how nice Sister Cecilia and Lisa Harris were—as was Father Al, who took me upstairs in the elevator. I was REALLY impressed to learn that many graduates of the school came back time and again to help in The Club, etc. My first year I soon discovered that it was too much to have a homeroom and also teach Music to all nine grades. So I dropped the Music. And how I loved teaching 5th grade! (The Best Grade) As you can see, though, I’ve been adding back the music. Each year the Choir seems to grow a bit and we sing more music on more occasions. So when June rolls around I will have so many things to put an end to, so many people to say good-bye to. But what a wonderful place at which to spend my last years of teaching and choir directing before retirement! I have been with many schools as a teacher, parent, substitute, etc. and have never cared so deeply about a place, my colleagues, students and their families. And I feel so well cared for and supported in return…

You know, I am still impressed by the same things that struck me on my first visit to the school: how nice the people are here, and how much loyalty and love the school engenders. Thank you, everyone, for thirteen wonderful years!

Christine Johnston
5th Grade Teacher
Choir Director
My experience in the Geography Bee has been quite a thrill. Having competed in the Bee since the fifth grade, I have learned a lot of new things. I remember back in the fifth grade, one of the most important things to know was the location of Montpelier or the longest river in North America. Our fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Johnston, was the one who introduced the Geography Bee to our school.

When I first competed in the Bee, I didn’t know what to expect. I was only 11 years old and I had forgotten to study. I was eliminated in the second round, but I was still proud that I had the privilege to compete in the Bee. I improved in my second year and became the school champion. By then, I had realized that I was naturally curious. I never seemed to notice that I always liked to watch the news or surf the net for information. Whenever I stumbled upon a place or an event that I have never heard of, I always look it up online or in books. I am always up to date on the latest news. My knowledge of places and their significance helped me win the Bee.

I received help from many people, especially Mrs. Johnston. She prepared me for the Bee and helped me in many different ways. She provided study material and often tested us after school. My family has always encouraged, supported, and inspired me. I hope to do well at the State Level.
Salesian Service-Learning
By Annie Konstin, SSL Moderator

Salesian Service-Learning is a vibrant expression of our SSPP Salesian school family. Our weekly meetings give us time to plan and to reflect on our many projects. Guest speakers help us to see the bigger picture and experience outreach to the needy. The faculty moderators, Sr. Rachel Crotti, Harriet Schatz, and I contribute our unique talents to SSL while providing consistency, encouragement, direction and service opportunities to our twenty student members.

This year SSL has spearheaded the collection of eyeglasses to benefit the Lions Club worldwide vision program, warm coats for the homeless in our city, baby clothes for the Birthright Organization, and even Halloween costumes for needy children in our community. Each drive calls for planning, advertising, collecting, sorting, organizing, distributing and evaluating the entire project. After all the hard work, we have a simple, joyful celebration. This is SSL at SSPP—but don’t take my word for it. Our students say it best so here are some quotes...

“I appreciate hearing our guest speakers explain the different challenges that the needy around us are facing each day. When I announce our projects, it gives me a great feeling to be inviting our students and parents to get involved in helping others. SSL has made my life happier because it has made me a more caring person.” --Jolina Lau, Gr. 8

“SSL has taught me that we are life-long givers. The Birthright Program has changed the way I think about needy mothers-to-be. I have more knowledge about the program and I’m glad to do my small part to be of help.” --Victoria Eng, Gr. 8

“When I am in high school I want to join a service club so that I can continue learning to be a better volunteer to help the needy.” --Eunice Wong, Gr. 8

“The warm coat drive made me realize that doing good for others is very fulfilling and even fun. Being in SSL has taught me that we all have the duty to spread God’s love and joy through action for the less fortunate. My SSL experience will serve me well in high school and throughout life.” --Alexis Ordoña, Gr. 8

“SSL has enriched my life. It has directed me away from just thinking about myself toward caring for others—especially the needy.” --Ania Borysawska, Gr. 7

“SSL has helped me to be more responsible and committed to helping the needy. I have definitely become a better person because of SSL.” --Gino Ragusa, Gr. 7

“SSL has guided me to realize that compared to many needy people around me, my life is actually luxurious. I also see that I have the duty to reach out and help others.” --Brice Lockhart, Gr. 7
With birthday cakes and *Cat in the Hat* hats, a parade and sing-a-long, 300 students from Pre-Kindergarten through eighth grade celebrated the master of wit and rhyme Theodore Geisel on the 103rd anniversary of his birthday at Sts. Peter and Paul School on March 2, 2007.

Better known as Dr. Seuss, Ted Geisel is the author of *The Cat in the Hat* and countless other wonderful children's stories. These stories led generations of children to discover the joy of reading. Read Across America is a nationally sponsored event initiated ten years ago by the National Education Association (NEA). Each year schools across America are encouraged to participate in the annual event promoting reading for all.

Guest readers from the community, parent body, and even some grandparents joined the students at Sts. Peter and Paul School in each of the classrooms. Classes were broken into small reading groups and these caring adults treated students to 30 minutes of read-a-louds.

Volunteer readers included Father John Malloy, SDB, pastor of SSPP parish, Dr. Lisa Harris, Principal of SSPP, Captain James Dudley and Officer Fred Crisp from Central Station of the San Francisco Police Department, educator and author Professor E. D. Hirsch, Jr., authors Phoebe Cutler and Desmond Smith, Andrea Wong from the San Francisco Symphony, Salesian Boys and Girls Club directors, Ty Debrunner, Randy DeMartini, Russ Gumina and Joselyn Staley, and more than 25 parents.

Students and teachers alike were enthusiastic to partake in this national demonstration of the importance of reading. Sts. Peter and Paul School hopes to continue its participation next year in NEA's Read Across America.
On Friday, May 11, the Sts. Peter and Paul Dance Team held its fifth annual Dance and Choral Festival. This year’s event featured 16 wonderful dances and a farewell choir performance led by our retiring Choir Director, Christine Johnston.

The Saints Peter & Paul’s Dance Team has come a long way since its first performance in the 2001/2002 school year. As many of you may remember, the Saints Peter & Paul Dance Team performed one routine as the opening act for the 2002 Eighth Grade Spring Play. In 2003, the dance group was given a night of its own. In 2004, the Choir, led by Christine Johnston, joined the dance group and the night was renamed “The Dance and Choral Festival.” In 2005, we were fortunate to have alumni return and perform, and we also welcomed guest dancers from San Francisco Gymnastics.

Now in 2007, we number 109 dancers and 57 choir members.

Our philosophy has been to provide our students with a vehicle through which they may express their creativity and become aware of the connection between body, mind, and spirit. On the more practical side, our students learn that keeping their bodies physically fit can be fun and rewarding. There is nothing better than the joy experienced when all the hard work is realized on the night of the performance.

As always, it was a pleasure working with the children and helping them create an evening to remember.
Results of March 10 Competition

This year was Sts. Peter and Paul's second year of competition in the Academic Junior High Decathlon.

The Decathlon started around January and meetings scheduled for decathletes included giving up lunch periods to watch musicals for the Super Quiz and dedicating some time after school to study for the different events. A big thanks goes out to Mrs. Gunter, Mrs. Johnston, Sr. Kathleen, Ms. Konstin, Sr. Margaret, Ms. Mathisen, Mr. Riley, Ms. Schatz and Mrs. Wayne, for dedicating their time to coach the decathletes.

The Decathlon took place on March 10, 2007, at St. Pius School in Redwood City. Many came to support our decathletes including families, teachers and fellow students. The day started with the Logic Quiz, followed by individual testing, lunch, the Super Quiz and finally the Awards Ceremony.

This year, Jolina Lau, Gr. 8 placed second for math and Edmond Quan, Gr. 7 third for current events. They both received medals. The decathletes who didn’t place in the top three were all smiles because the Team did better this year than in the first year of competition. In the Logic Quiz, Super Quiz Team Captain Katie Lau, Gr. 8 said, “I’m very proud of the team because we did better than last year. We were able to answer more questions in the logic quiz and we scored a 27 in the Super Quiz as compared to the 22 last year.”

The overall standings are: Norte Dame Des Victoires School came in first, followed by second place St. Gabriel School and finally Nativity School in third. Good luck to future decathletes and most importantly, study hard in school!
We want to hear from you!

We are continually updating our database. Please send us your updated contact information if it is incorrect on the mailing label.

We also want to know all about our SSPP Salesian graduates. Please send us any news that you would like to share and your story could be in our next issue: lharris@stspeterpaul.san-francisco.ca.us

In order to continue to provide an excellent learning environment for our SSPP children for many years to come, we need your support. Please take the time and make your tax deductible donation today.

SSPP Graduating Class of 2007

8th Grade Teacher: Ms. Dana Wayne  Student Teacher: Miss Chellsea Rivera

Top Row: Jenna Gebhardt, Annabella Rossetti, Sabrina Soracco, Sam Caine, Chandler Williams, Stephanie Hurtado, Roger Lau

3rd Row: Emily Huang, Christina Yu, Jonathan Jew, Kevin Lee, Kevin Soracco, Daniel Stornaiuolo, Justin Dorsey, Jason Tang, Jackson Cheang

2nd Row: Stephanie Yee, Eunice Wong, Ambrose Vuong, Bryan Lee, Christina Yee, Victoria Eng, Melissa Lee, Barry He, Vincent Chan

Front Row: Stephen Au, Katie Lau, Alexis Ordoña, Patricia Jang, Jolina Lau, Filippo D’Asaro, Michael McDonald, Alibrando Petrini

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