SSPP Fashion Show
2009

Story on Page 4
Welcome to the 2009 edition of the Beacon. Saints Peter and Paul School has had a banner year! Our students have achieved their academic goals and many of them have been given public recognition for their efforts. Our students have been given awards for excellence in academics, excellence in writing and poetry, excellence in geography competitions, and excellence as Academic Decathletes in the Archdiocesan competition. Our high school applicants have received honors upon admission to the high schools of their choice and scholarships to these same schools. The students of Saints Peter and Paul School have shown their talents in drama, dance, choral events, and of course the ever important sports teams. The students, faculty and parents have even demonstrated their skills at modeling at our Faculty Sponsored Spring Fashion Show. Generosity and service to community have been a very big emphasis for our school children and families. The Salesian Service Learning Club has sponsored many charitable projects throughout the school year. There were several trips to the San Francisco Food Bank where our school counselor, along with parents and their children, prepared hundreds of bags of food for those less fortunate. As you read the articles in the newsletter, you will see that we have had a very busy social calendar throughout the year. I am blessed to be the principal of a school that never stops evolving and exploring new frontiers. We are a community of very unique and gifted individuals who openly share talents and time. One of my proudest moments is Graduation Day because I know that we are sending off our students with excellent skills to carry them to high school and beyond.

“Our high school applicants have received honors upon admission to the high schools of their choice and scholarships to these same schools.”

During these challenging economic times we know that our school families are making tough choices in order to make a Catholic School education a reality for their children. Our faculty and administration understand the commitment of our school families and we feel the weight of the responsibility we have to educate and prepare these students for the future. Our founders, Saint John Bosco and Mother Mazzarello, are certainly smiling down upon our Saints Peter and Paul Salesian School. Our school community certainly exemplifies the Salesian spirit of Reason, Religion and Loving Kindness. To the many individuals who support the efforts of our school I thank you from the bottom of my heart for assisting us in providing so many opportunities to our students. I invite you to consider donating to our school. Donations toward our scholarship program and or to our special co-curricular activities is one way to assure that our school can continue to touch the lives of our future leaders. Saints Peter and Paul School is a not for profit organization.

Enjoy reading our Beacon and catching up with all of the Salesian news that we have to share. I thank you in advance for your continued support of our school.

Blessings to you and your loved ones!

Dr. Lisa Harris
Principal
Beacons can be used for good or evil. Pirates used to light bonfires as beacons on the beach to wrongly direct a ship against cliffs or beaches, so the cargo could be looted after the ship sank or ran aground. Beacons or lighthouses have been used for centuries to direct ships away from danger in a safe harbor.

Have you ever visited a lighthouse? Point Reyes has one that has operated there for over a hundred years. If you ever visit the Point Reyes lighthouse, you’ll realize that a lighthouse seems always to be put in dangerous and desolate places.

Our “Beacon” must be like a lighthouse to give comfort and direction to those who read it, in a world that is safe and secure only when we keep close to school and family and church. To all those who prepared the publication, slaved over the articles, and artistically presented the material, congratulations. Share the light of the “Beacon” with all your friends.

Jessica Soracco ’03 was selected by the Italian Heritage Committee to represent Queen Isabella in the Italian Heritage Parade last October. To become Queen Isabella, Jessica competed with several other young ladies in interviews where she was judged on her poise, public speaking ability, community involvement and knowledge/enthusiasm of her Italian heritage. As Queen, she rode on the main float during the Columbus Day/Italian Heritage Parade, along with ten other ladies as part of the Royal Court. She also represented the Italian-American community at various celebration events in September 2008, including the Blessing of the Fleet, the Madonna de Luma procession and the Grand Ball. As her year is nearly complete, Jessica is very grateful to have had this wonderful opportunity to represent her Italian heritage.

Currently Jessica is a student at Sonoma State University. She’s a graduate of both Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory and Saints Peter & Paul Salesian School.

This coming October marks the 141st year the Italian-American community will celebrate Columbus Day. Come to North Beach and enjoy the parade as well as the fun and games at the Columbus Bazaar.

Thank you again to Saints Peter and Paul School for all your support to Jessica, 2008 Queen Isabella.
The Faculty, Staff, and Administration of Saints Peter and Paul School sponsored a new fundraiser this year. This year the teachers decided that we needed to show our support to our school community and contribute to the awesome fundraising efforts that our school families put forth annually. These are challenging economic times and we want our school families to know that we support their efforts and that we are willing to put in extra elbow grease to build up our fundraising dollars.

We created a wonderful event called the Spring Fashion Show. Teachers, parents, students and two of our Salesian Sisters modeled for the event. Sr. Ann truly ushered in April showers with a lovely raincoat, hat and umbrella ensemble, and Sr. Antoinette modeled a beautiful hand crocheted shawl and beret. The lavender shawl and beret that Sr. Antoinette lovingly crocheted went to the president of our Parent Advisory Board. Truth be told, there was a bit of a bidding war between the Principal and the Advisory Board President.

Ms. Staley and Ms. Wayne worked together to find just the right music for our models. The runway portion ended with the grand finale which was the song “We Are Family.” It was really inspiring to watch the whole educating community come together to make the Fashion Show a success! There were days spent after school with teachers making beautiful decorative flowers for our gym. Sr. Jean was the head designer in the flower making department. The Laura Vicuna Pre-School educators and director created beautiful center-pieces for the tables.
Our chef was our very own Paul Riley who is our Junior High Math, Spanish and Language Arts teacher. He made a lunch that was pure perfection. We are thrilled with the rave reviews that the luncheon has received. As the Principal of the school, I am a bit worried that some new restaurant might snap up our beloved Mr. Riley.

Every great event has to have an organizer and task-master. Claudia Fernando was the glue that held the event and all of us together. Claudia shared her talents from the onset by making our lovely invitations and creating databases for our silent auction and ticket sales. Claudia is a graduate of Saints Peter and Paul School and currently serves as our school librarian.

Sr. Kathleen Gibson turned out to be one of our best marketers for the event. She found so many generous people in our community and they really helped to make our event profitable. In the planning stages we crossed our fingers and hoped that at least 150 people would join us. When all was said and done, we served close to 380 people. We exceeded our expectations in every way during this event.

I have only mentioned a few of the faculty and staff members who worked to make our event a reality. In truth, I can say that each and every member of our faculty, staff and administration participated in making our fashion show and silent auction a huge success. The teachers not only worked to make the show happen, but they also submitted personalized events for the families to bid on. Mrs. Wayne planned a golf day for two lucky students, and Mrs. Garthwaite offered bird watching days at Crissy Field. We have teachers baking with students, taking them on sight seeing tours in San Francisco and planning lunches and dinners that are filled with quality time for them to share.

I could go on and on about how proud I am of our Salesian Community. We certainly know how to work hard and be serious, but we also know how to share time together and laugh and play. Saint John Bosco is most certainly proud of our Salesian Spirit. He believed in life being a balance of work and play, and I think we have taken this philosophy and put it into action at Saints Peter and Paul School.

Spring has Sprung here at Saints Peter and Paul School and the fashion show was a wonderful way to start the season.

Salesian Ambassadors

By Sr. Ann Cassidy, F.M.A.

Linda Curreri was born right here in San Francisco, and Frank came to this country from Italy in 1937. Frank saw action in Europe during WWII, and when he returned he met Linda. They were married in 1948 right here at SSPP, and have been married for 61 years!

Frank and Linda have two children, Tonina & Mario, (both of whom received all their sacraments here) and 4 grandchildren.

Frank has been a member of the Holy Name Society for 60 years, and he has held every office in the Society. He has also been a church usher since 1955, and he always works at the Bazaar. Linda volunteers at bingo during the Bazaar. Both Frank and Linda have worked preparing lunches for our school children for the last 15 years!

God bless them!
Five years ago Sister Rachel Crotti spearheaded the Salesian Service Learning (SSL) Program at our school. Today a group of 7th and 8th Graders meet every Wednesday during their lunch period to brainstorm ways to offer service to the Community. Most organizations that need volunteers require students to be older than an eighth grader so we have found our own small ways to be helpful. Over the past years we have sponsored valuable collection drives: Halloween costumes, warm coats, children’s books, used eye-glasses, baby clothes and infant supplies. Our next collection drive will be a children’s book collection. These books will be sent directly to the mountainous area of Bohol in the Philippines for a library that is currently under construction and is expected to be finished in August 2009.

For the past two years we have invited all school families to join us at the San Francisco Food Bank where we sort cans of food, repackage rice, beans and pasta so they are ready for distribution to those in need. It has been wonderful to join with SSPP students and their families and work a shift at the warehouse on Pennsylvania Avenue. Once you work at the SF Food Bank, you are hooked. You can’t help but feel amazed at the facility and how well organized it is. The number of people they serve is astounding and SSL loves doing its part. Both children and adults have fun working together for this great cause. Families have been so responsive and continue to return because it adds significance to their lives to do this service.

Another drive sponsored by SSL was The Make-a-Wish Foundation of the Bay Area. Collection boxes were placed in each classroom and the students were asked to give what they could. We also raffled a cute Teddy Bear. We were able to donate a little more than $400.00 in this first year. What most excited us was the spirit with which students displayed their generosity. Penny jars and change boxes were sacrificed for the cause. The Kindergarten raised the most money in coins—more than $100.00. The raffle brought in $200.00.

As always, we are so proud of the generosity of our students and their families. We believe that giving to others is a great way to acknowledge one’s blessings. We believe that when children get the idea that they are blessed with abundance and that they are capable of doing acts of kindness and generosity, they will grow into adults who understand the spiritual value of community involvement and volunteering. How great is that?

Going Green
By Sr. Ann Cassidy, FMA

This year, because of increased worries about global warming, our school has gone “green.” We have begun a composting program suggested by Kevin Mitsuda, an 8th grader. The program got off to a great start because of the educative and hands-on support of Rachel Pomerantz from SF Environment and the help of representatives from Sunset Scavenger. Already the 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th grades have been trained to monitor the bins during lunch in the cafeteria, helping the younger students to learn how to sort and recycle.

Prior to the opening of the academic year the Student Council proposed that we begin to collect money, by means of fundraisers, with the hope of installing solar panels. This way we would continue to learn about the importance of making responsible use of technology and natural sources. After meeting with our pastor, Fr. John Itzaina, SDB, and Mr. Russ Gumina, Director of the Salesian Boys and Girls Club, together with Dr. Harris, our Principal, it became apparent that there were financial obstacles as well as structural concerns to implementing a solar paneling project at this time. However, give it a few years and the technology will become more efficient and less expensive. In fact, Fr. John surprised the Student Council by sharing the news that he had already investigated this possibility. It’s great to see that our school is exploring ways to do good for our planet!

The GoGreen fundraiser, sponsored by our PTO, was a huge success! Not only did the school make a profit, but several companies involved in eco-friendly products came to educate those who attended the fair. The food was prepared by one of our parents, Mr. Craig Rowe, aided by our own 7th grade teacher, Mr. Paul Riley. It was really tasty and people were happy. It proved to be a tremendous success and was a great evening to learn what you can do to help our environment and continue to strengthen our community.
First Grade Students from Saints Peter and Paul School and their families participated in the Martin Luther King National Day of Service this year. Our first grade volunteers and several of their friends signed up to work at Crissy Field for the day of service. There was weeding of dandelions, non-native plants, that took place in the area that was formerly used as the air strip.

The students and their families worked from 9:00 to 12:00 and enjoyed a beautiful San Francisco day. There was a great team spirit during the day of service as approximately 80 people spent the day doing their part for Crissy Field. Our fine First Graders and their families made the 6:00 P.M. News on Channel 7. Our Student Learning Expectations address the topic of students becoming responsible citizens. Way to go First Graders; you did just that!
We began the school year with the San Francisco Opera returning to Sts. Peter and Paul School where several of our eighth graders performed in La Bohème. This was the fourth year that the San Francisco Opera Guild invited Sts. Peter and Paul School to perform with the opera company. The students did a magnificent job and truly enjoyed participating in the performance. I enjoyed preparing the students for their performance. A special thank you to Mrs. Ellen Ruperto, our choir director, for all her hard work.

Sts. Peter and Paul School’s holiday season began with our Christmas play, Miracle on Main Street, under the direction of Sr. Ann Cassidy. On December 18th, the gym was filled with parents, school families and parishioners who were treated to a wonderful performance by our students from Pre-K through Grade 8. The message of this year’s play was, “A Christmas without Jesus is like giving a present with no gift inside.” The students did a wonderful job and the play was enjoyed by all who attended. If you are in the neighborhood next December, we would love for you to join us.

We kicked off the Spring season with “Beggar and the Wolf” performed by our eighth grade under the direction of Mr. Paul Riley and me. The play takes place in the village of Gubbio, Italy in the early 1200’s. It was quite amazing to witness our eighth grade students evolve into the characters they were playing. They all did an outstanding job!

In May, we traveled “Around the World in Dance” with Ms. Dana Wayne’s SSPP dance group. They performed dances from various countries and truly enjoyed learning about different cultures. A special thank you to Mr. Paul Bunjevic, father of Sanja (Grade 2) and Vladan (Kindergarten), who taught some of our dancers an authentic Serbian folk dance. Please join us next year in May (date TBA) when our dance program celebrates its 10th anniversary. It will definitely be a show you will not want to miss.

For the second year in a row, Museo Italo Americano returned to Sts. Peter and Paul School bringing to our Jr. High classrooms their C.I.A.O (Children’s Italian Art Outreach) program. This year, their focus was on the Italian Renaissance, specifically the artist Raffaello Sanzio and his famous work of art in the Vatican, The School of Athens. The students had the opportunity to learn about the Renaissance period and learned the process of making a Renaissance cartoon. It was truly an experience they will never forget.

As you can see, our students were quite busy this school year. We hope that many of you will be able to join us next year for our various events. We look forward to seeing you!
On February 28, 2009, our community held a celebration for our Sisters at the Westin St. Francis Hotel. There were over 800 people to celebrate the occasion. The evening had entertainment, food, and testimonials. This was a very special and important evening for our Sisters. The celebration thanked them for what they did, all they do, and all they will do following God’s call.

The entertainment of the evening included a welcome by Joseph Marchetti and Russell Gumina, the co-chairmen of the gala dinner. The National Anthem of the United States of America was sung by Maria Pignotti and the musical salute Centennial song “Give as a Gift” was sung by SSPP and Corpus Christi. Then there was an invocation by Reverend Father Timothy Ploch, SDB, Provincial of the Salesians of Don Bosco. During dinner the entertainment was a musical tribute to vocations “A Call” performed by alumni of SSPP, a performance by SSPP Dance choreographed by Dana Wayne, and a Corpus Christi musical number “Behold a Lady” choreographed by Juliet Boles (a SSPP Alumni). The entertainment of the evening was enjoyable and the dinner was delicious.

There were also many testimonials throughout the evening. Most Reverend Archbishop George Niederauer of San Francisco was present and spoke. Sister Sandra Neaves, FMA, Provincial of the Western Province, introduced and presented the honored Sisters in attendance. Archbishop Niederauer and Reverend Timothy Ploch, SDB, presented the Awards. Sister Celine Lomeli, FMA, presented the closing remarks. Reverend Father Armand Oliveri, SDB, conducted the benediction.

This was an amazing evening. The Sisters had family, friends, pupils, and alumni to help celebrate this occasion. The Sisters were able to see the gratitude we have for them. As Sister Kathleen Gibson, FMA, said, “This was a once in a lifetime experience of God’s many blessings to us, the Salesian Sisters. It was a marvelous tribute of deep appreciation and gratitude that so many people have for the Sisters. It is an honor for us to serve God’s people, Saints Peter and Paul, and elsewhere. My wish is that God may continually bless all those who had made that great Centennial celebration so successful and memorable.” Thank you for all that you do; May God bless you, Salesian Sisters!!
YMI Holds Annual Essay Contest  
By Betty Garthwaite

President Michael Amato ('72) of the Young Men's Institute (YMI), St. John Bosco Council #613, chaired the Sixth Annual Jim Calabretta Essay Contest. $10,000 in prize money was generously awarded among the 58 contestants. Sts. Peter and Paul School students—Alessandra Fernando, Gr. 8, Elizabeth Silva, Gr. 8, Francesco Trogu, Gr. 8, Rachel Harris, Gr. 6, and Sofia Trogu, Gr. 6 were all award winners. SSPP alums Alexis Ordoña ('07), Jessica Soracco ('03), and Kevin Soracco ('07) were also recipients of cash prizes.

Topics with a political slant were selected for this year’s contest. The customary three divisions were used as in previous years: students in Grades Six through Eight, High School students, and College students. The 300-word essay was judged on originality, thoroughness in its view, and writing clarity. Students were asked to write on the following topics:

- While some Americans worry about the environment and global warming, others are concerned with rapidly rising fuel prices and our over-dependence on foreign oil sources. Please tell us your views about whether our government should allow oil companies to develop potentially oil rich but environmentally sensitive areas along the Alaska/California coastline and why. (Gr. 6 – 8)

- In July 2008, California established a new law that prohibited cell phone usage while driving a car in a non-emergency situation. Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with this new law and discuss your reasons. (High School)

- In January 2009, a new U.S. President will assume office and begin work to address many important issues facing this country currently. Given that some will view his first 100 days in office as pivotal, please tell us what issue(s) our new President should address during this period and why. For each issue presented, also suggest at least one new policy or action he should order. (College)

Essays were judged by teachers invited by President Amato from various schools in the San Francisco Bay Area: Janet Bechelli, Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory, Janet Burke, St. Veronica School, Amanda Fiorito, Monte Verde School, and Betty Garthwaite, Sts. Peter and Paul School. All contestants should be applauded for their effort and we thank YMI St. John Bosco Council #613 for their dedication to today’s youth.

Congratulations Class of 2009!  
By Dr. Lisa Harris, Ed.D.

High School applications and entrance tests are far behind the Class of 2009! Our students have been accepted to a variety of excellent High Schools and we are very proud of their accomplishments. Here are the schools our graduates will be attending.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>High School</th>
<th># of Students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Heart Cathedral Preparatory</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lowell High School</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galileo High School</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Archbishop Riordan High School</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convent of the Sacred Heart School</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drew High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immaculate Conception Academy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mercy High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saint Ignatius College Preparatory</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamalpais High School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westmoor High School</td>
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Decathletes finally mark the end of the decathlon year with a bang. At the Thirteenth Annual Academic Junior High Decathlon held Saturday, March 14, 2009, at St. Pius School in Redwood City, we placed fifth overall out of the 17 participating schools. Francesco Trogu, Gr. 8, won a first place medal for Current Events.

At the decathlon we had a lot of fun as we competed against many schools. These schools included: Corpus Christi, De Marillac Middle School, Ecole Notre Dame des Victoires, Good Shepherd, Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mission Dolores, Nativity, Our Lady of Mercy, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, St. Anthony-Immaculate Conception, St Charles, St. Gabriel, St. John, St. Pius, St. Raymond, School of the Epiphany, and SSPP.

This year we actually completed the Logic Quiz. This test consists of 20 rigorous thinking problems. In the Super Quiz, our overall score was 40 out of 50. The subjects for the Super Quiz included: artist Claude Monet; The Civil Rights Movement; in literature we were quizzed on a book titled *The Name is Bud Not Buddy*, in Science, the muscles of the human body, and in Religion, the Gospel of John.

We did extremely well and that day many of our coaches and parents encouraged us to do our best. Even though we did not win a huge trophy, we still showed the other schools what SSPP was all about. More importantly we showed ourselves we could study hard and work as a team. Thank you to all the parents, coaches, and the decathletes for a job well done.

**Decathletes:**

Krystal Cheng, Alessandra Fernando, Laurence Lau, Anna Lee, Alessandra Marchi, Stelios McDonald, Brentan Owyang, Elizabeth Silva, Ivan Szeto, Francesco Trogu, Max Vuong, Nicholas Marchese

**Coaches:**

Faculty Advisor Maria Tam Gunter ('78), Sr. Ann Cassidy, FMA, Abby Herget, Annie Konstin, Theresa Parilo, Paul Riley, Harriet Schatz, Sandy Wayne, Karina Mathisen