

A Letter from Our Principal

This particular section of the Spirit newsletter is normally reserved for whatever profound words of wisdom and insight I have to share with the great and faithful readers of this publication! With each edition I delude myself into believing that the space I occupy is well worth the print. (Insert laughter here.) However, there are so many wonderful articles to share this time, that I am cheerfully relinquishing the space. As always, I hope you enjoy reading about the many diverse accomplishments, adventures and experiences of our amazing school community! May you have a truly blessed New Year!

Crystal A. Smith
Principal

First Day of School

*“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.
Involve me and I learn.”*
- Benjamin Franklin

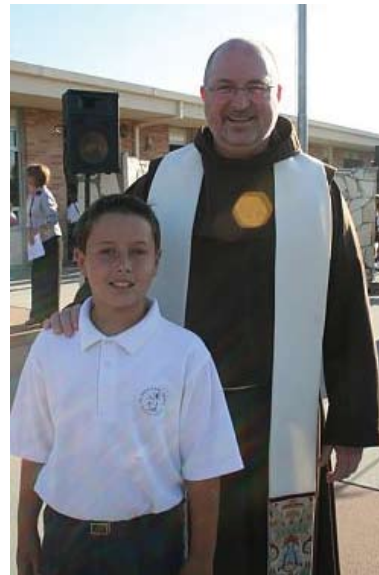
Brilliant white crisp shirts and blouses, sharply pleated uniforms and shiny new shoes, backpacks brimming with supplies...maybe even a few “butterflies” at meeting new faces...there is NOTHING like the excitement of the first

day of a new school year! Here at SSJ, it doesn't take long for everyone to get into the swing of things. We have many hard working, dedicated staff members and volunteers who “hit the ground running” before the very first bell rings in September. INVOLVEMENT – that is our key to success at Sts. Simon & Jude, not only with our students, but with their families as well.

It is such fun to see the unbridled enthusiasm as families document this important day with photos, hugs, a few tears and lots of love! Our wonderful Hospitality Committee makes sure a delicious selection of pastries and coffee are waiting for those



School Board and PFA Members: **top row:** Mike Pepek, Cindy Daughtery (SSJ '74) and Kellie Smith, **front row:** Kristi Reynolds, Tricia Johsz, Marina Velardi, Steve Peterson, Tom Saeman, Diana Rogers, Kevin Price, and Nadia Miller



Jack Peterson poses for a photo with Fr. Michael

parents who have time to join us. We are so very grateful to our PFA and School Advisory Council members who are on hand to welcome parents and students, answer questions and familiarize our new families with the many ways they can become involved in our school and parish. Fr. Michael, our Pastor, and the Pastoral Associates join us for morning prayer as



Room 4B students and parents pictured left to right: Kyra Le, Mrs. Tran, Kristina Pepek, Malia Walencewicz and Julia Kelly



*Founded on the
Franciscan faith...
Preserved with
parent pride...
Sustained by staff
and student spirit...*



Back to School (continued)

they welcome the families and show their support for the school community.

Now, here we are at mid-year, and yet, the same ideal rings true. Involvement – a wonderful opportunity always awaits! Whether it is baking class party treats, filling a position on the PFA Board, or sharing your career with a classroom full of inquisitive students, it is always involvement that creates the best memories and makes a difference. Many thanks to all our beloved, involved members of the Sts. Simon & Jude School community! You are the best!



Haley and Max Copeland share their first day of school with their grandparents and their father, Anthony Copeland (SSJ '82)



Pictured left to right are a group of eighth grade students and parents: Mr. and Mrs. Feldman, Madison Feldman, Rachel Buyan, Lauren Hughes, Katherine Garcia, Sarah Riley, Mrs. Riley (SSJ '84), Julia Hughes



Mrs. Hombrecher and her sons, Austin and Davis



Mr. Abaoag enjoys the photo opportunity with his sons, Joseph and Jacob



Christine Nguyen and her daughter, Kaitlin Chan



First grade students and parents join together for a group photo: Mrs. Miranda, Mrs. Farney, Mrs. Cheryl Wills (SSJ '82) Mrs. Hass, Mrs. Smith, Mrs. Dicrisi, Jordan Miranda, Carli Farney, Mia Starr, Kate Hass, Nicole Wills, Emily Smith and Anna DiCrisi



Third grade student, Lily Carroll, poses with her mother and little brother

Class of 1995 Gathers for Reunion!

Jennifer Archuleta (SSJ 1995) sent us this wonderful picture taken of the SSJ Class of 1995. The graduates gathered together at the Shorebreak Hotel in Huntington Beach for their 15-year reunion.



Those classmates in attendance (left to right in photograph) were: Philip Garcia, Patrick Yip, Katy Cullmann, Jennifer Archuleta, John Deakers, Reiko Porter, Ryan Janisse, Alicia Mena, Monique Oskam, Nicole McFadden, Cheyenne McAdoo, Kristin Gelb, Chris Pieters, Trista Thomas, Jill Maguin, Garren Box, Michelle McKnight, Elaine Ho Chen and Adam Perry. Those not pictured who were also in attendance were: Kristin Santoro, David Galich, Rosemary (Coffee) Richter, Kristin Van Herk and Meghan Broderick. Here is what some of the alumni from 1995 had to say about their experience:

“It was really great that we were able to get together. It meant so much seeing everyone!” -Kristin Gelb

“It was a blast” - Jill Maguin

“Lots of fun! But, I must say we do look great 15 years later.” – Cheyenne McAdoo

“We are all so lucky to have been in school together for so long, and have a reunion this great! This was a perfect night.” - Nicole McFadden

Planning a reunion for your SSJ graduating class? Contact kdomenici@ssj.org and we can help you get in touch with those classmates who have registered with our alumni association. Please send in your contact information (name, address, email and graduation year) to receive updates on alumni events and reunions!



Armistice for Everyone



Andrew Tabera prepares for the flag ceremony

Is there someone you just haven't been able to work things out with after several months or years of trying? You might consider proposing an armistice with them. The term “armistice” means an end of hostilities with an expectation of negotiating lasting peace. The term armistice became a household word near the end

of World War I when the Germans signed an armistice agreement with the Allies on November 11, 1918, ending the fighting of “The Great War.” Armistice Day has come to be known as Veteran’s Day in order to include recognition of those serving in the military in all of U.S. history. Since the WWI armistice was signed on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, Veteran’s Day is celebrated on whichever day of the week the 11th of November falls. Imagine being able to celebrate an armistice anniversary with the person with which



Fr. Christian and Veterans from our school and parish community with their sons and grandsons

you’re experiencing the conflict.

Sts. Simon & Jude School has initiated an annual tradition of recognizing Veteran’s Day with a ceremony at the beginning of the school day.

In gratitude for our freedom, we start the ceremony with prayers focused on service and peace. Sts. Simon & Jude students involved in scouting perform a flag ceremony recognizing the symbol of our national unity. Parents and family members of our school and parish who are veterans are called forward to receive a blessing honoring our faith and the call to serve others. The event concludes with a patriotic song – this year, a number of 5th grade students sang “God Bless America” under the leadership of Mr. Maurice Freleaux.



The Pack 226 Cub Scouts await the start of the ceremony



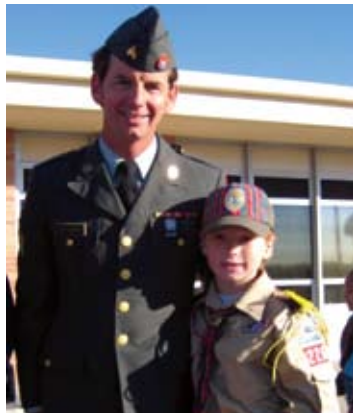
Girl Scouts extend their hands as Fr. Christian prays for a blessing on our Veterans

“I was overwhelmed with pride at seeing our children show respect for the flag and for our country,” commented

Armistice (continued)

Mr. Jeff Vance, a marine veteran and father of Michaela Vance, a SSJ 6th grade student. "I was also humbled and honored to see the SSJ students in their uniforms, knowing that the SSJ parents and staff are bringing up these children in the traditional values of good character and personal excellence." Mr. Vance also shared that he was grateful to be able to stand shoulder to shoulder with other parish veterans who had gone through similar training and shared the love for country and dedication to service. "It was an emotional experience to be recognized by the students, parents and staff," Mr. Vance added.

Allen Schaben, an Army reservist, SSJ parishioner and parent of two scouts, arrived in full uniform. Mr. Schaben spoke about his reactions to the recognition. "I'm grateful to be a part of something bigger – dedication to doing things right and to helping people. We are standing here for those who are unable to stand, those who were lost in the defense of our freedoms. This type of event makes it more real for our children and helps us remember to appreciate the blessings we have." Mr. Schaben indicated that he also enjoyed the ability to talk to other veterans after the ceremony and share stories about service to our country.



Allen Schaben, SSJ parishioner and Scout Leader, proudly shares the moment with his son, Evan

Near the end of the event, Mr. Freleaux pointed out a little known bit of history that was quite relevant to the ceremony. The song, "God Bless America" was written by Irving Berlin and first sung publicly on Armistice Day, 1938. In addition, Mr. Berlin has signed all royalty rights for the song over to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. We can all be grateful for the peace that follows conflict. This we can celebrate not just once each year, but every day we bring peace to our neighbor. We are grateful to all school parents, students, family members and staff who participated in this memorable ceremony.

Reigning Festival Champion is Diminutive Fourth Grade Student, Mia Gault!

Sts. Simon & Jude School is full of bright and talented students with many noteworthy and outstanding accomplishments. But did you know SSJ is also home to a two-time reigning champion of the annual pie eating contest held at the Fall Festival?

Mia Gault, a student in Mrs. Modarelli's fourth grade class, celebrated her second victory in



Mia Gault, reigning pie-eating contest champion

the 8-10 year old bracket at the 2010 Fall Festival by chomping down almost a full pie in just minutes! The competition was steep amongst the boys and girls in this age group, yet Mia captured the prize against all odds. Right before the competition began, Mia didn't want to participate because she had just finished an enormous slice of pizza with her friends. But at the last minute, she sat down at the end of the table and put on her game face. An entire pie was placed in front of each participant, and the timed event was enjoyed by the crowd as they encouraged the kids with shouts of "Go!" and "Great job!"

Clearly a crowd favorite, her friends cheered her on by chanting "Go Mia!" Mia was so happy at the end of the contest! She was the winner of a gift certificate for gelato, which we're sure she waited a while to redeem due to a very full stomach. Congratulations, Mia!

The Fall Festival has something for everyone. All weekend long one can enjoy delicious meals, unlimited snacks, cold beverages and sweet treats, exciting rides, dancing, a fantastic amateur talent show for our youth, and professional entertainment as well. Please consider joining us next October for the annual SSJ Fall Festival. All alumni who have registered an email address with us receive an invitation to the festival every year. To register just send your email address and

SPIRIT

contact information to Kathleen Domenici, Alumni Relations Coordinator, at kdomenici@ssj.org.



SSJ Class of 1999 rekindles friendships at the Fall Festival

This year, one particular group was undoubtedly the winner for gathering their graduating class together for a “mini reunion” at the Festival! Those in attendance from the SSJ Class of 1999 were: Jonathan Boustani, Michael Clement, Danielle DeCarr, Mallory Domenici (our very own SSJ third grade teacher!), Matthew Garcia, Tommy Molioo, Meghan Murphy, Linda Ruiz Pena and her mom, Mrs. Mary Ruiz (former Spanish teacher at SSJ), Alex Scurr, and newlyweds David Wilfert and Rachel Gergen Wilfert! Register your email address with us today, and let’s make YOUR class next year’s winner!



FALL FESTIVAL 2010



My Japan Trip by Connor Saeman

Every summer our newly elected SSJ Student Council officers attend a wonderful leadership camp at Pitzer College in Claremont, which is administered through TACSC, The Association of Catholic Student Councils. This year however, our Commissioner General, Connor Saeman, took his “leadership camp experience” a bit further. About 5,500 miles further to be exact. Connor was one of the fortunate selectees to travel with “People to People” as a student ambassador to Japan! Here’s a glimpse of his fantastic, life changing experience – in Connor’s own words:



“There aren’t enough words to describe this “People to People” Student Ambassador Japan trip. It all started with a simple letter in the mail. An anonymous person recommended me for the trip, so I decided to give it a try. The process included a selection interview which I passed, and after three orientation meetings I was off! I got to experience the world like never before. I also made a whole bunch of new friends from all over California, North Carolina, and South Carolina. After meeting the North and South Carolinians and everyone from my delegation at LAX, we got ready for the 10... hour... flight. Upon landing in the Narita airport, we were pretty tired, so we headed straight for the hotel in Tokyo for some shut-eye. My roommate and I had a rough sleep due to the time change, but by the next night, we were all good. For three nights our delegation enjoyed all that Tokyo had to offer, such as the Imperial Palace, the Meiji Shrine, and the Asakusa Kannon Temple. Then we took a scenic excursion up Mt. Fuji, which was by far the highlight of my trip. It was the wonderful hiking, fan-



tastic view of the little city of Hakone, and the colder environment (as you can imagine, summer in Japan is pretty hot) that put it over the top on the rankings.

Next, we ventured out for a two-night stay in Takayama, where we saw the Japanese Alps. Did I mention it was a 9...

hour... drive? Anyway, I worked out the kinks at the natural hot springs near the hotel. The relaxation of the minerals in the water seeping into your skin can make you speech-



less with contentment. We spent two days in Takayama. Our next excursion was to Ishikawa, a small town in the countryside of Japan. There we escaped from the bustling city into the quaint, quiet country. We delved into typical Japanese life in Ishikawas during a local middle school visit, where we spent two periods in the life of a Japanese student. The next day, we were partnered off and sent home with a Japanese family for lunch. My host family was the Masakis, and they treated me to some excellent food, and even some Japanese video games. Three nights there, and we were off to Hiroshima for a serene afternoon at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. I



will never think of nuclear warfare the same again. There was everything from extremely vivid images and models, to quotes and pictures of those who passed on in the tragedy. Once you see in exquisite detail the mass destruction, numerous deaths, and sheer terror that an atom bomb

can bring, it really changes you. I also found out there were two bombings. It was life changing to say the least.

We went to Kyoto after Hiroshima, where we visited Myajima Island, the Golden Pavilion, and the Kyogen Theatre. By this point in the adventure, I was getting pretty homesick. But it was just my luck that it was time to head home by then. Yet again, a 10-hour flight brought me to my destination. I was finally home. I said it once, and I’ll say it again; Japan was the best trip of my life!”



Tim Kelleher, Class of 2001, Creates Twend.it Website!



If that title sounds vaguely familiar to the recent storyline for the movie



entitled “Social Network,” that’s because it IS vaguely familiar! Tim Kelleher (SSJ 2001), together with a college classmate, brainstormed how to design their popular website during lunches and dinners at a local restaurant near their college campus, University

of California at Riverside. Since its creation, Twend.it, a website that lists the top 10 current trends and the longest running and most frequent trends, has garnished the attention of national media, and has been cited in Forbes online magazine.

Tim and classmate, Nick DiFilippo, created the program after noticing Twitter didn’t track long-term trending topics. Originally, it was hosted on Tim’s personal blog. That all changed when a Brazilian actor spotted his name on the list and “tweeted” a link to Tim’s blog. More than 13,000 hits later, the server that housed the blog crashed. Since then, Tim and Nick hired someone to redesign the website and came up with the name “Twend.it,” which combines Twitter and trend into a name they believe is brandable.

In his spare time, Tim enjoys computer programming, film, cycling and poker. He is employed as an Assistant Systems Administrator in the Electrical Engineering Department at UC Riverside. A busy college student/entrepreneur, Tim took the time to give us a hint as to his upcoming adventures: “My future plans are to graduate next year, while keeping my job with the University of California at Riverside. After graduation, I plan on continuing my other current job as a programmer for a web hosting company. Hopefully, they will bring me on full time. Other than that, I’m working on Twend.It, trying to set it up for some future commercial success.”

Perhaps when you are catching a matinee a few years from now, you just might be watching the story of our very own SSJ alumnae, Tim Kelleher, and how he turned Twend.it into a household name. Keep up the amazing work, Tim. We wish you the best of luck, and congratulate you for the recognition your talent and hard work have gained you!



SSJ Cheerleading Team Fundraiser at McDonald’s? *I’m Lovin’ It!!!*

If you were out shopping for a Happy Meal, or having a “Mac Attack” on November 11, 2010, and happened to end up in a restaurant packed full of Dolphin



Cheerleaders – you were part of the very successful fundraiser held at the McDonald’s on Beach & Indianapolis in Huntington Beach!

The parents of our award winning cheerleaders worked side by side with the staff of McDonald’s in a joint effort to raise funds for competition entrance fees. The cheer squad worked in the lobby adding a jovial spirit to the restaurant while their



parents labored behind the counter in various responsibilities such as making the famous McDonald’s french fries, mixing shakes and taking orders from customers.

How coincidental that our SSJ school colors matched the McDonald’s employees’ uniforms! It truly added to the merriment and looked very festive. Teachers, family, friends and a special visit from our principal, Mrs. Smith, made the event a true community effort. It was so much fun for everyone involved, especially a few of the parents who worked at McDonald’s when they were teenagers. What a trip down memory lane!

Thank you to everyone who came by for the fun event. We are extremely grateful for the support from McDonald’s. After a tally of the night’s sales was computed, the squad raised \$300 to put towards their upcoming competition



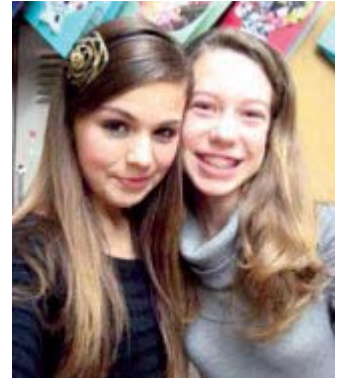
entrance fees. Now we can add another cheer – “Double Double Cheese Cheese Burger Burger Please Please” to our traditional chant of “Go Dolphins Go!”

Making a Difference One Small Step at a Time

Two of our alumnae from the recently graduated class of 2010 have completed a project for Girl Scouts which not only received local recognition, but acknowledgement from Washington D.C. and the President of the United States!

By organizing meals for the families at Ronald McDonald House and collecting pajamas for children that suffer with illness, Paige Strabala and Claire Tabera have earned The Girl Scout Silver Award. When asked by their Girl Scout Troop Leader, Diane Jones, what all this meant to them, their answer was, "What we learned about ourselves is that we have the ability to make a difference in the world by making sick children feel more loved, not necessarily by doing huge things, but that the little things really count. What we learned about others is that there are people in the world who are less fortunate than us because they are sick and might not live a long, happy life. The families are going through a very hard time and we can help them, even if it means simply a nice meal and a new pair of pajamas."

They also were the recipients of a medal from The White House awarded by President Barack Obama for giving over 200 hours of Volunteer Service working on various projects to help improve our community, one small step at a time. It is with pride that we send off these accomplished young women, who just a few months ago were SSJ students, and we look forward to future accomplishments during their high school years. Thank you, Paige and Claire, for your excellent example to other young people of just how much you can achieve when working for the good of others!



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