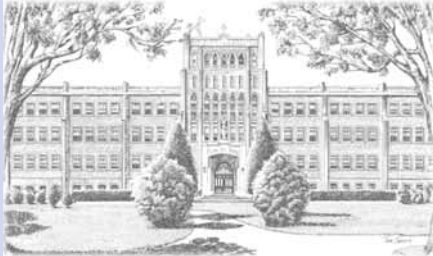


Focus

Celebrating 87 years of educating young women.



The Alumnae Newsletter of
Mount St. Mary Academy

Winter 2009

Mount St. Mary Academy, founded by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, is a Catholic, private, college preparatory school for young women. Within a nurturing and academically challenging environment, the Academy strives to develop the whole person. Guided by our Catholic tradition, and rooted in Gospel values, we educate young women dedicated to lifelong learning, moral integrity and service to and acceptance of others.



Old Home Days

Another Fall has come and gone, and with it the hustle and bustle of a new school year. Each September, we open our doors not only to our students and faculty but to returning friends, people near and dear to our hearts. These first months of the school year feel to us like "Old Home Days." Phrases like "Remember when..." and "We used to..." echo in the hallways. We are reminded of how much Mount St. Mary's has changed and yet how much it has stayed the same.

This year we have celebrated reunions for the class years ending in -4 and -9, as well as enjoyed a few impromptu special alumnae events. We share with you the excitement of these celebrations, in hopes of inspiring your next reunion or encouraging your own homecoming.

Class of 1949

On September 12, a vibrant and very active group of women met for their 60th reunion at Fanny's Restaurant. Of the 44 original class members, 26 are still living, more than half of whom attended the reunion traveling from all across the country. These women were kind enough to invite Sr. Carol Ann Kleindinst, SSMN (1967) and Assistant Principal of Academics, to join them. "What struck me most is how each of these women remains in touch with the others," says Sister. "They had such a strong desire to remain faithful to the Mount, to the Sisters of St. Mary who had directed their lives and to keeping the bonds of friendship that had been born at the Mount so many years ago."

Class of 1954

On October 3, the Mount was alive with the sound of the 29 members of the Class of 1954 raising their voices in greeting and song while celebrating their Reunion Mass in the Chapel. The Mass was dedicated to the memory of the ten deceased members of the class. Following the celebration at the Mount, the party continued at the Buffalo Club with dinner and several more hours of sharing and recalling old times. The Class invited Principal Dawn Riggie (1971) and Assistant Principal for Institutional Advancement Julie Wojick (1985) as their guests for Mass and dinner. "Amazing... We all fell right back into our craziness as though 55 years had not passed," said Patricia Moss-Means, reunion coordinator. She encourages out of town classmates to keep in touch so a mini-reunion can be arranged for their next visit. The Class of 1954 also made an encore appearance at the Mount on November 22 to see the student production of "Hello, Dolly!" together.



The Class of 1954 reunites at the Buffalo Club

Class of 1959

Much excitement surrounded the 50th reunion for the Class of 1959, as they saw one another for the first time in a number of years on September 19. The chapel reverberated with happy noise just before they began the liturgy. Sr. Carol Ann comments, "The Chapel must have been a central part of their lives, since they seemed to pray together so seriously and sang so heartily. What struck me during the liturgy is how the experience of Mass was binding for them." After Mass, the class asked about this year's play, and reminisced about their own senior play, "The Boy Friend," one of the highlights of their years at the Mount.

Class of 1964

On October 24, the Class of 1964 met at the Grapevine Restaurant for a boisterous and joyous 45th reunion. They were hard to quiet down, but if anyone could accomplish the mission it was Sr. Frances Deffge, one of their favorite English teachers who delighted the class with her presence. The class asked Sr. Carol Ann Kleindinst to be their guest speaker and were delighted to hear how things have changed, especially the growing number of sports teams! One thing not so exciting? The change in tuition -- back in 1964, \$180 bought you a Mount education. It's just a little bit more expensive now!

continued on page 3

Dear Sister Alumnae,



This past fall we've had the opportunity to welcome back or join in celebrating with quite a few groups of alumnae. What a pleasure it has been to meet and visit with them. Each and every group has spent time, as we all do when we are reunited with our classmates, reminiscing about our days in these fair halls, sharing stories of classmates and escapades, laughing and reconnecting. It is a privilege to be part of these events and to hear the stories. As I listen, I realize how far the school has come in the past 82 years, and how very different the world is now, especially for women.

Back in 1927, this school was physically much smaller, and the classrooms – with just desks, chalkboards, paper and pencils -- would be considered bare bones by today's standards. The new wing classrooms, Main Office, cafeteria, gym and auditorium were just a dream. The Angelus rang at noon and everything stopped for prayer. A brown bag lunch from home was the only lunch available. Athletics were few and ladylike. And women's options after high school were often limited.

Our girls today are educated in a truly impressive facility of nearly 100,000 square feet set on a five acre campus. Our school features an 1000-seat auditorium, full-size gymnasium, and education-focused computer technology in all our classrooms. We now have a Library Media Center, Technology Laboratories, Science Laboratories and Fine Arts Studios - including music, theater, dance and art. Academically MSM is one of the premier education institutions, ranked for the past two years in the top 5% of all Western New York high schools – both public and private – by Business First. Our young women can choose from among 22 different athletic teams, including Cross Country, Track, Swimming, Cheerleading, Soccer, Volleyball, Basketball, Golf, Bowling, Badminton, Softball, Tennis, and Lacrosse. Today, virtually every girl goes on immediately to the college or university of her choice, and our alumnae have been accepted into many of the country's top colleges and universities. Career choices for women today are virtually unlimited.

But truly, at the heart of it, so much of Mount St. Mary Academy is the same. The Sisters of St. Mary of Namur who formed this Academy with their blood, sweat, tears and prayers infused this school with a spirit which has been, and will continue to be, the core of MSM. The hearts and spirits of the girls are the same – they were true gold then and they certainly are now. The love we share for our alma mater is present now as it was then. The Mount has always had that special feeling of warmth and a sense of family that makes our school feel like a second home.

I am overwhelmed with a sense of privilege to be able to meet these women, my sister alumnae, and to work with and know the girls who have followed them. "Mounties" are truly very special women. Spending time with alumnae and with our girls today affirms the dedication everyone here feels to continue the good work the Sisters began, preparing young women to meet the challenges of, and to assume leadership roles in, society with moral integrity and compassion. The challenge is to help young women afford this excellent education and the opportunities for their future it can open up. We all have a place in this continuum – we were privileged to receive the gift of a Mount St. Mary Academy education in the traditions and values of the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur, and we take that gift and hand it on to future young women. Your generosity to both our Annual Giving Program and our Angel Scholarship Fund make this possible.

Thank you for your part in all of this, for both your financial support and your prayers. Come back and visit. Come for tea. Come join us for a sporting event, one of our concerts or other activities. This was home for us all during our high school years, and your home it still is: a place you are always welcome.

May God bless you.

Dawn M. Riggie (1971)

The word "Nurture" is written in a white, serif font on a blue rectangular background. The background features a faint, circular emblem with a cross and other symbols, likely the school's crest.

Interested?

If you graduated in a year ending in -0 or -5 and would be interested in planning your class reunion, please contact [Alexandra Kogler Fussell](mailto:afussell@mt-st-marys.org) (1996), Coordinator of Alumnae and Public Relations at 716-877-1358 or afussell@mt-st-marys.org. The Mount offers reunion planning assistance and would love to welcome your class home.



The Class of 1974 after their reunion Mass.

Class of 1974

The Mount was happy to host the Class of 1974 for their 35th anniversary on November 14. The class started with Mass in the Chapel, celebrated by Msgr. Francis Weldgen, who asked the class, "What things do you value most in your life? Would you have said the same on graduation day?" Mass was followed by a tour of the school – our Alumnae Hall was a favored spot and even a few pictures of the Chemistry lab were in order (yes, our lab tables are still the same!) The evening continued with wine and cheese in our newly decorated Conference Room. It was clear to all in attendance, no matter how much the classmates may have changed, their friendship remains the same.

Class of 1984

On October 17, the Class of 1984 met at the Mount to kick off a much-anticipated reunion. Speaking to the class, Principal Dawn Riggie (1971) commented, "Seeing you all today reminds me of the first day of school, when our students come in with their milk crates and locker decorations, eager to chat and filled with excitement to see each other." After catching up in our cafeteria, the class set off on a tour of their old haunts, paying visits to the "Small Aud," the Chapel and gym. The reunion continued at the Tonawanda Castle before moving on to a nearby bar for more celebration, a few hours proving much to short of a time for a class who has not had a reunion in quite a while.



The Class of 1984 at the Tonawanda Castle.

Class of 1989

To celebrate their 20th anniversary, the Class of 1989 planned a two-day extravaganza starting on Friday, November 13 at the 31 Club. Sheilagh O'Connor was the impromptu mistress of ceremonies, and no one could have done a better job. Twenty three of the original 59 graduates caught up as they noshed on the 31 Club's signature duck fries (their spin on French fries) and enjoyed their wine and martinis. The following day, some of the class joined with the Class of 1974 to celebrate Mass at the MSM Chapel and tour the school. Classmates visiting the school commented, "It was great to see how much had changed and how much had stayed the same."

In addition to our class reunions, we have welcomed back several groups who celebrate other milestones, and sometimes no milestones at all.



The Class of 1962 have an unofficial reunion.

A Day of Summer Fun

The Class of 1962 celebrated an unofficial reunion, taking the opportunity to enjoy a wonderful summer day at Veterans Park on September 10. This lively group of true Mounties came up with a fantastic idea for an Alumnae-Student Volleyball game – stay tuned for more details, because the challenge has been accepted!

1970s Wine and Cheese

Over the years, we've noticed that the classes of the 1970s have stayed uncommonly close, despite the span of years. We invited all 10 classes back to the Mount for an evening Wine and Cheese and a chance to mingle on home turf. The group took off on an impromptu tour that included the auditorium and the Chapel, and were entertained by a slide show featuring fabulous 70s hair! Guest speaker Tim O'Shei, faculty member and Business First Managing Editor, spoke to the group about the school's fantastic student writers.



Anne Sweeney Arena (1976),
Mary O'Brien Merigold (1976) and
Maureen Curry Kennedy (1976)



Members of the Class of 2009 pose in the gym.

2009 Thanksgiving

As we have for many years, the Mount invited back the most recent graduating class for a special Mass of Thanksgiving. On Wednesday, November 24, the Class of 2009 returned to MSM for a special Student Council-sponsored brunch. This traditional welcoming-back brunch offered the classmates a chance to chat about college life and visit their beloved teachers.

As we give thanks this year, we count all of our alumnae among our blessings. We are thankful to have been a part of your lives and thankful for the footprint you have each left in our halls and on our hearts. Happy Holidays!

The Chapel: Continuing Values

One of the most common questions we hear is: “Do you still use the Chapel?” *The answer – a resounding “Yes!”*

The Chapel that was once at the center of our scholastic mission is still a central part of our daily activities and is a core part of our innovative and inspirational campus ministry program.

The Chapel was consecrated in 1932 and was used daily by the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur and by the students throughout the majority of the school’s history. Many of you remember the Chapel as an integral part of your school days, when students would stop in the Chapel for prayers before lunch or when school Masses were regularly held there.

In 1994, when the Sisters moved to St. Mary Center, the Chapel faced an uncertain future. Since the Chapel physically stands on the convent side of the building, it technically belonged to that part of the property. After several years of stop and start development and a valiant effort on the part of the school, a resolution was reached, which allowed the school to have use of the facility for all school functions.

The Chapel is not used for Masses for the entire student body – but for a good reason. It is just too small. School Masses now take place in the auditorium, where we can celebrate together with room to grow. Class Masses and individual Religion classes are now held regularly in the Chapel.

Under the direction of Ms. Helen Scimeca, our campus ministry makes special use of the Chapel. Through the campus ministry program, students learn to personalize their experience with faith. Each class is assigned a symbol to represent them as a whole (past symbols have included hearts, butterflies and footprints). In religion class, the students decorate a felt cut-out of their symbol to reflect their individual style and tastes which is then sown to an altar cloth, used for all class Masses and class celebrations throughout their four years. When not in use these banners grace the pews, a loving reminder of the Chapel’s vitality.

The Chapel is also available to alumnae who wish to celebrate a special Mass commemorating their anniversary year. If you wish to visit the Chapel, please contact Mrs. Alexandra Kogler Fussell (1996), Coordinator of Alumnae and Public Relations, make an appointment to tour the school independently or with your friends. We often receive requests for private celebrations in the Chapel and such requests can be accommodated. We’re blessed to be able to share this landmark with all of our family, both past and future. We know that the Chapel was a special part of your life and we hope it will always be.



The Chapel as photographed in 1933.



The Chapel today.

Do You Facebook? We Do!



The Mount has started a Facebook page. Not only is Facebook a great way to keep in touch with our most recent classes, but we’re delighted to have been able to reconnect with some alumnae with whom we had lost contact. We use our Facebook page as a way to encourage involvement and reminisce. Friends stop by our wall to share memories of their days at the Mount, see new pictures or hear the news around school. Friend request us and join the fun.

<http://www.facebook.com/home.php?#/MountStMaryAcademy>

Founder's Week

Every year, the Sisters of St. Mary of Namur celebrate Founder's Day on November 11 as a day of community and family. This year, they were kind enough to celebrate with us.

Marking the 190th anniversary of the order's founding, the Sisters planned a special week of activities at the school aimed to help today's students understand religious life and the deep connection between the Sisters and Mount St. Mary Academy.

Between November 9 and 13, ten Sisters visited the school including: Sr. Kathleen Dougherty, Sr. Mary Alice Dean, Sr. Catherine Taberski, Sr. Mary Laura Lesniak, Sr. Barbara Riter, Sr. Rosemary Riggie, Sr. Lori High, Sr. Marian Baumler, Sr. Corinne Yarborough, and Sr. St. Lawrence Ailinger. Each Sister visited with the students, speaking to religion classes about the history of the order and the school, as well as their own personal history.

Part of the purpose of the Founder's Week visits was to help the students understand what a religious life is like. Each Sister told about her calling – why she joined the order and the path on which her calling had led her. Sr. Lori High spoke in the Chapel to two of our religion classes, standing on the spot where she took her vows 31 years ago. Moved by the opportunity to return to the Chapel that had meant so much to her and the Sisters, Sr. Lori knelt on the spot and retook her vows.

The Sisters also created a presentation which was on display in the school cafeteria throughout the week, showing pictures of them as teenagers, as young novices and today, and telling their stories. The presentation and the Sisters' visits drew the attention of the young students in unexpected ways. The students asked the Sisters questions like "Would you come back and teach here now?" Their longing for a closer connection to the Sisters was obvious, and is shared by our alumnae and faculty.

Over the 82 years, the school has witnessed dramatic changes in the culture of religious life. Many of our alumnae speak of the days in the 1940s and 1950s when the school was operated completely by the Sisters and almost every teacher was religious. Even during the 1960s and 1970s, religious life still drew the attention of young students. In the words of one alumna, "It seemed natural to us that many students would graduate and move to the other side of the building." But in today's society, the life of the religious puzzles our youth.

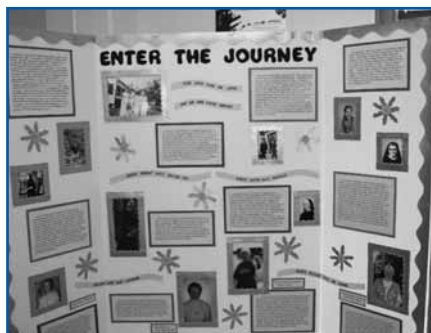
Currently, Sr. Carol Ann Kleindinst, who serves as our Assistant Principal of Academics and teaches English, is the only Sister on the faculty. The Sisters are still closely connected to the school and serve in positions on our Board of Trustees and Alumnae Board and often volunteer for events. But many Sisters have retired or have jobs throughout the Diocese.

It has been 15 years since the Sisters moved from the convent to St. Mary Center at Annunciation, but they have never gone too far from Mount St. Mary Academy. "Leaving this school behind was very difficult for many Sisters," said Sr. Carol Ann. "Mount St. Mary was our home, and the school was our life's work."

So many of the Sisters were eager to return to the school, that Sr. Carol Ann had no difficulty in finding volunteers to speak. After this year's Founder's Week activities, it's obvious that the event was a success. Much like a college student away from home for the first time rushes into her mother's arms, Mount St. Mary's students eagerly embraced the Sisters' return as well.



Christine Colson (2012) granddaughter of Mary Theresa Furfari Colson (1954), Sr. St. Lawrence and Alyssa McGee (2012).



The Sisters photo display in the Cafeteria.

Remembering Sr. St. Augustine

September 17, 2009 was the 5th anniversary of Sr. St. Augustine's death. So many tributes about her thoughtfulness and care were spoken at her memorial service at that time. However, as much as I wanted to add mine, I was not able to speak. I am sure that there are many other Mounties with similar stories of how Sr. St. A. encouraged or just pushed us through high school and beyond.

When I entered the Mount as a freshman, I was certain that I was the most insecure student ever. At the prompting of one of the sisters at Kenmore Mercy Hospital to do so, I mustered up all the courage I had and enrolled at the Mount. My family had not practiced Catholicism since I was in 2nd grade. I had no religious education past making my First Holy Communion and was afraid to let it be known to anyone. Additionally, my parents had just separated. A few smiles and kind words from some of the sisters started to breakdown some of my insecurities. As I'm sure she did a number of other girls throughout her many years of teaching, Sr. St. A ("Gussie" as she was frequently called by the student body) took me under her wing. I doubt that I would have completed my high school years at the Mount without her tutelage.

As the years after graduation passed, Sister remained a faithful correspondent even when I wasn't. Whether in person or in letters, she continued to challenge you to be the best and to love and serve God. She also always let you know that you could count on her prayers.

Sister never missed an opportunity to express her love and pride in the Sister of St. Mary of Namur and the many, many girls that attended the Mount. So often she would ask "You remember so- and- so from the class of whatever year, don't you?" I have no doubt that she is continuing her concern and prayers to this day for each Mountie.

*Mary Laubenthal
Class (1961)*



Sr. St. Augustine, 1961

What's Going On Around the School

Looking to the Future

Even though the school year has just begun, Mount St. Mary Academy is already busy preparing for the 2010 freshman class. The school's admissions program, led by Assistant Principal of Institutional Advancement, **Julie Rosenecker Wojick (1985)**, hosts a series of events that introduce 6th, 7th and 8th graders to the Mount. In the fall months, 8th graders are the primary focus as they will be making their choices before the snow begins to fly.

On September 27 and 28, the Mount hosted Open House, our first opportunity to introduce the school to prospective students. Families are invited to visit MSM and are taken on a tour of the facilities. Each family is paired with a current student who shares interests with the prospective student, showing the family classrooms, introducing them to faculty and talking about some of the Mount's activities and athletics. This year's Open House welcomed over hundreds of prospective students and parents and also offered families the chance to talk with parents, alumnae and Board of Trustees members.

After Open House, 8th graders have the opportunity to shadow at the school. Many alumnae may remember their own "shadow" day, a full day visit when the prospective student attends classes with a current freshman. This inside glimpse into day-to-day life as a Mountie often convinces a prospective student that she wants to go to the Mount.

One of our most fun recruitment events is Meet the Mount night, an evening of games and activities where middle schoolers can meet and mingle with potential future classmates. On October 16th, 125 middle-school students joined us for our Hawaiian themed *Mount St. Maui* night. Assigned to "homerooms" like the Beachcombers and Big Kahunas, students went to "classes," learning hula dancing, making volcanoes and Hawaiian crafts and coconut bowling. The evening ended with a Tropical Relay in our auditorium.

As the winter approaches, the Admissions department will get down to the serious work of selecting the class of 2014, reviewing Placement Exams results and admission essays. We can't wait to welcome our newest Mounties!



Prospective Mounties learn to Hula Dance at Meet the Mount night.

How big is the school now? We currently have 306 students enrolled for the 2009-2010 with 72 current freshmen. Over the years the Mount's enrollment has varied vastly. Where does your class fit in? Here are our three largest and smallest (post-Depression) graduating classes:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Class of '64: 195 | 1. Class of '91: 22 |
| 2. Class of '60: 182 | 2. Class of '43: 25 |
| 3. Class of '63: 160 | 3. Class of '92: 27 |

What determines class size?

Some of you who went to the Mount in the 1990s may be shocked at how big our classes have gotten, while our 1960s graduates may be surprised to see a class that fits in one graduation picture. Why do Mount classes vary so much in size? It's certainly not a lack of interest in coming to the Mount! Sadly, the economy is often the deciding factor. Prospective parents are concerned with the cost of sending their daughters to a private school and often times, Buffalo families just cannot afford the tuition.

Mount St. Mary's tuition is currently \$8,100 – a price far lower than an MSM education is worth, but still costly. While financial aid is available, there are certainly many girls who just cannot afford to enroll.

This year we have focused our efforts on raising money for scholarships. We recognize the financial need in this area of Western New York and as our founding Sisters did, we seek to provide a quality education to young women who need it regardless of their financial background. Your contribution to the MSM Alumnae Scholarship or Angel Scholarship Fund – in any amount – could mean the difference between a public education and an academic experience at Mount St. Mary Academy that shapes a young life.

Call the Development Office at (716) 877-1358 to make a donation.

Make the call and make a difference.

Hello, Dolly! It's so nice to have you back where you belong!

Following a tradition almost as old as the Mount itself, the curtain has fallen on yet another fantastic fall musical. On November 20, 21 and 22, Mount St. Mary students performed *"Hello, Dolly!"* under the direction of Mrs. Rene Schaeer.

This is Schaeer's fourth year directing, producing and choreographing the MSM musical. Her work on last year's musical *"Bye-Bye Birdie"* earned a Best Choreography Kenny Award.

Playing to an enthusiastic crowd every night, MSM's up and coming stars dazzled the audience with songs like "Ribbons Down My Back," "Before the Parade Passes By" and of course, the title song "Hello, Dolly!" The play starred **Sarah Frank (2010)** as Dolly Levi, **Elise Roberts (2010)**, daughter of **Lynn Schneggenburger Roberts (1981)**, as Irene Malloy and **Katie Krieger (2010)** as Minnie Fay. One of the favorite moments of this year's production was "the Waiters' Gallop," a number that featured the Dance Troupe in men's wigs!

The play, which is set in the 1890s, required a great deal of costuming. **Peg O'Brien Simons (1978)**, whose daughter **Megan Lawrence (2011)** played Ermengarde, performed miracles turning alumnae-donated bridesmaid dresses and formal attire into period clothing.

The stars of "Hello, Dolly!" shared the stage on Saturday, November 21 with some of the Mount's past musical legends. Cast members from the 1975 and 1987 "Hello, Dolly!" productions, as well as the 1995 musical revue "Jerry's Girls" were invited as special guests. The honored alumnae took the stage to join this year's cast in the encore song and were then feted at a reception in our Conference Room.

Though it's always sad to see the curtain fall on play season, we hope to see MSM's budding theatrical talent on a Broadway stage someday. Until then, there's always next year!



*Katie Krieger (2010) as Minnie Fay,
Sarah Frank (2010) as Dolly Levi and
T.J. Newton as Cornelius Hackl*



*Michelle La Monte Mosgeller (1976), Julie Tuyn
Worham (1976) and Diane Lupp Kelly (1976)
look at their yearbook after "Hello, Dolly!"*



*Anne Klug (1996), Alexandra Kogler Fussell (1996),
Lisa Battaglia Garvey (1996) and Jessica Fortunate
(1996) celebrate their return to the MSM stage*

Around the School

MSM Thunder took second place in the Msgr. Martin Soccer championship. The Thunder fought hard in the final round against Nichols and ended the year with much to be proud of. Senior **Bre Catipovic (2010)** scored 143 goals to beat the Mount's all-time individual goal record, previously held by **Molly Bagley (1998)**. Bre was also chosen for the First Team All WNY, First Team All -Metro and is the Co-MVP of the MML.

Rebecca Siegrist (2010), great niece of **Linda Knab Roll (1964)** was recently named a 2010 National Merit Commended Student for her performance on the 2008 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) test. Rebecca scored in the top 5% of 1.5 million students who took the PSAT.

On Wednesday, October 21, the Mount St. Mary Thunder paid tribute to **Alison McLean Gmerek (1983)** by playing a Pink Soccer game against Nardin, where Alison taught. Alison passed away last year after a long fight against breast cancer. To honor our alumna, the Thunder wore blue jerseys with pink lettering and gave pink wristbands to their Nardin opponents.

We've made a few changes at MSM this fall. Though you may recognize the names, these individuals have taken on new roles at the school:
Sr. Carol Ann Kleindinst, SSMN (1969) is now the Assistant Principal of Academics. Additionally, Sr. Carol Ann teaches Senior Honors English.

Julie Rosenecker Wojick (1985) is the new Assistant Principal of Institutional Advancements, overseeing Admissions, Development and Public Relations.

Bonnie May, inducted in 2005 as an Honorary Alumna, is the new Coordinator of Development and will continue her work as the organizer of the Chrysalis Auction.

Alexandra Kogler Fussell (1996) joins the MSM team as the Coordinator of Alumnae and Public Relations.

Alumnae NEWS



Barbara Brady (1971) married Dennis Reiner on August 16, 2008. Her sister **Pat Brady Pirrami (1972)** was her Matron of Honor.

Sarah Obermeier (1989) and David Kraatz got married on May 16, 2009 on a yacht on the New York Harbor.

Kristy Casale Saverino (1993) married Sidney Saverino on August 9, 2008.

Rachel Plesh (1999) has announced her engagement.

Jessica Griffin (2000) announced her engagement to Dr. Kyle Kalbarczyk. The wedding will be held in June 2010 in Buffalo, NY.



The wedding party of Sara McNeill McGee (2000)

Sara McNeill (2000) married Michael McGee on April 25, 2009 in Buffalo, NY. Bridesmaids included the following Mount alumnae: **Erin McNeill Radley (1997)** sister of bride and matron of honor, **Hillary Kleppe (2003)** cousin of the bride, **Stephanie Barbari (2000)** friend and future sister in law of the bride and **Ellen Breloff (2000)** friend of the bride. Sara and Mike reside in Chili, NY.

Jaclyn Shaw (2004) is engaged to marry Matthew Zaragoza-Watkins. The wedding is planned for July 2010.



Nicole Nadbrzuch (2006) married Nelson McCullough on January 1, 2009.



Emily Crainer (2008) married James Robert Taylor on August 14, 2009.

Emily Crainer Taylor (2008) and her husband, Rob.

Births



Lee Anne Nugent (1970) and husband Don became the proud grandparents of Jacob Robert Nowak on May 3, 2009, born to daughter, Jennifer, and son-in-law, Bob Nowak.

Tracy Koch Polisoto (1989) and husband Jeff are the proud parents of their third child, Andrew Joseph, born in September, 2008. Andrew joins big sister, Julia (7), and big brother, Alex (5).

Karen Keffer Roberts (1992) and her husband, Michael, are pleased to announce the birth of their daughter, Hannah Jane, born November 25, 2008. She joins big brother, Owen Michael (3).

Melissa Mergl Richey (1993) and her husband, Benjamin, are pleased to announce the birth of their twin daughters, Ava Rose and Mara Francesca, on May 13, 2009. They join big brothers Colin (5) and Evan (2). The proud grandmother is Francine **Militello Mergl (1969)**. Ava and Mara are cousins to Michele Militello Then (2000) and Megan Militello (2004).

Kara Hoadley Bishop (1996) and her husband, Derrick, are proud parents of Reagan Jane, born on August 7, 2009.

Alexandra Kogler Fussell (1996) and her husband, Robert, are happy to announce the arrival of Madeleine Gayle, born June 6, 2009. Great-aunts **Sister Mary Vincent, SSMN (1952)** and **Geraldine Kogler (1955)** are excited to have a future Mountie in the family!

In Memoriam



Please pray for the following members of alumnae families who have died.

Roseannetta Barone Kurowski (1954), November 24, 2009.

Donald T. Barry, January 8, 2009, father of **Laura Barry Perillo (1973)** and **Patricia Barry Mulcahy (1977)**.

Linda McCarthy Becker (1969), June 29, 2009.

Eleanor J. Bojanek (1967), April 8, 2009.

Emily Brady, November 17, 2009, mother of **Sr. Patricia Brady, SSMN (1959)**.

Robert Buchnowski, March 31, 2009, husband of **Teresa Potter Buchnowski (1957)**, brother of **Joanne Buchnowski Penna-Cowe (1963)**, **Joyce Buchnowski (1966)** and cousin of **Elizabeth Buchnowski Robel (1957)**.

Gail Sekelsky Bushardt (1963), July 20, 2009.

Charles Camillo, April 18, 2009, husband of **Carol Lippert Camillo (1951)**.

Joseph Cannata, November 22, 2009, grandfather of **Jennie Cannata (2008)**.

Mary B. Capozzi, October 25, 2009, grandmother of **Meagan Miller (2002)** and **Leah Miller (2004)**.

Colleen Conlin, January 23, 2009, mother of **Kathleen Conlin Stancliffe (1971)** and **Donna Conlin Lecksell (1973)**.

Vincent R. Doherty, June 4, 2008, father of **Linda Doherty Pratt (1978)**.

Catherine Ryan Eigenmann (1954), May 30, 2009.

Agnes Jane Trabert Eisenberger (1939), February 17, 2009, mother of **JoAnne Eisenberger Pfalzgraf (1965)**, **Janet Eisenberger Harlach (1967)** (deceased), **Julie Eisenberger Stegmeier (1970)** and **Barbara Eisenberger Bremer (1972)**.

Mary Ellen Diebold Gasiuk (1952), August 5, 2009, sister of **Catherine Diebold Flanagan (1954)**, and **Gertrude Diebold Zoyhofska (1958)**.

Robert T. Gramza, December 31, 2008, father of **Debra Gramza Dudek (1977)**, father-in-law of **Annemare Martin Gramza (1980)**, grandfather of **Tanya Dudek (2005)** and **Nicole Dudek (2006)**, uncle of **Julia Eberhardt (2009)** and **Maddie Eberhardt (2013)**.

continued on page 9

Dorothy Hardick (1944), October 2, 2009, sister of the late Jean Hardick (1946).

Melvin M Hartley, February 14, 2009, father of **Sandra Hartley Chambers (1984)**.

Joseph P. Henneberger, October 12, 2009, brother of **Mary Henneberger Antoniw (1954)** and **Elizabeth Henneberger Giacco (1959)**.

Loretto Pinkel Kelsey (1938), May 9, 2009, recipient of the Mount St. Mary Alumnae award in 1988. Loretto was the sister of the late **Catherine Pinkle Jacobi (1933)**, and **Sister Eileen Pinkel (1951)** and aunt of **Mary Claire Jacobi Knapp (1967)** and **Anne Marie Jacobi White (1970)**.

Edmund McKenna, February 18, 2009, father of **Deborah McKenna Smith (1972)**.

Ann Dentinger Mollard (1945), January 23, 2009, sister of **Mary Dentinger Durkin (1944)**.

Daniel P. Murphy, September 20, 2009, son of **Marcia Leous Murphy (1975)**, grandson of **Thomas and Beatrice Leous** and nephew of **Elizabeth Leous Bressette (1977)**, **Carolyn Leous Singh (1979)** and **Suzanne Leous (1982)**.

Wesley J. Nichols, August 31, 2009, brother of **Marcia Nichols Kester (1968)**.

Patricia Brady Pirrami (1972), August 2, 2009, mother of **Maria Pirrami (2003)** and sister of **Barbara Brady Reiner (1971)**.

Sr. Mary Roark, SSMN, October 19, 2009, age 81.

Mary Maley Robb (1943), May 13, 2009.

Raymond Sinclair, October 27, 2009, husband of **Mary Ellen Seifert Sinclair (1947)**, father of **Kathleen Sinclair Lannen (1974)** and **Anne Sinclair Evans (1977)**.

Sandra LaPorte Stargel (1958), (date unknown).

Joseph Sweeney, November 8, 2009, brother of **Genevieve Sweeney Geibel (1940)**, uncle of **Genevieve Geibel Fitzgerald (1966)**, **Sheila Geibel Laird (1967)**, and **Theresa Geibel Carbone (1975)**.

Jack C. Walters, March 27, 2009, husband of **Anna Ciavarro Walters (1950)**.

Esther Treanor Werick (1937), August 29, 2009.

Alumni Notes



1950's

Jane Dukarm Henry (1951) was elected Chapeau (President) of the State of New York on July 24 at Verona, NY for the Eight and Forty, the Honor Society of the American Legion Auxiliary. The Eight and Forty's purpose is to aid children with Cystic Fibrosis and other respiratory diseases. Jane's project is to purchase laptop computers for Women and Childrens' Hospital to be used by patients with Cystic Fibrosis while hospitalized to further their education by keeping up with homework assignments, thereby allowing them to go on to college and build productive lives.

Terry Dolan Lombard (1957) is enjoying retirement in Venice, Florida after 18 years in residential real estate in West Lafayette, Indiana.

Eugenia (Jean) Nowak Ortiz (1957) has three sons and three beautiful grandchildren. After serving the public schools in the San Francisco area as a Resource Specialist, Counselor and Continuation high school teacher since 1975, she retired in 1999 and moved to the community of The Sea Ranch on the Sonoma Coast and is very happy to be there. Jean would love to hear from any former classmates.

Mary Ann Rosenecker Malinowski (1958) and her husband, Edward, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 13, 2009.

Mary Lou Becht Whalen (1959) is the proud owner a of Labradoodle puppy!

1960's

RoseMarie Griffo King (1960) has been living in the Rochester, New York area for the past 28 years. Her husband is deceased and she is retired. She has three children: Harry R. King III, Annamarie Kielma and John King -- and seven grandchildren. RoseMarie is looking forward to her 50th year class reunion.

Phyllis Wagner Hartmann (1960) has just moved back into the area after 37 years and is looking forward to her 50th class reunion in 2010.

Sue Ann Fitzgerald Phillip (1962) has just retired in September after 14 + years as an office manager for a real estate appraisal company. Sue Ann is looking forward to retirement, allowing time for more volunteering, and especially time to be "Grandma Sue" to her three grandsons. Sue mentions that she can't wait to see her classmates at their 50th reunion in 2012!

Carol Lazzaro Scholes (1964) announces that her son and daughter in-law are expecting twins in August 2009.

Margaret Liegl Culliton (1969) and her husband, Phil, whom met during their senior year in high school, celebrated their 36th wedding anniversary in June 2009. The family get together included their two sons, two daughters, **Megan Culliton Gomez (1996)** and **Elizabeth Culliton Washo (2000)**, sons-in-law and grandchildren, Noel, Francis, Nate and Gabe. In addition to their anniversary celebration, they also celebrated the christening of their newest grandchildren, Nate and Gabe Gomez. Nate's godmother is proud aunt Liz.

Camille Wozniak Buckley (1969) received board certification from the NACC (National Association of Catholic Chaplains) in October, 2008. She works for AIDS Family Services at ECMC ministering to patients with HIV/AIDS and as a per diem chaplain at Mercy Hospital in Buffalo. In addition, she spends Fridays in prison...as a Cephaz volunteer at Attica and Groveland Correctional Facilities. Camille finds these ministries to be powerful, enlightening, and an all-around grace-filled experience.

1970's

Pamela Priano (1971) has moved back "home" to Tonawanda, New York to spend time with her mother.

Angela Modica Baty (1976) became a licensed Wildlife Rehabilitator with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in November, 2008 and is currently volunteering at the Erie County SPCA in the Wildlife Department.

Moira Sullivan Dooley (1976) was elected Chairman of the Board for MJW Technical Services, Inc., a 50 employee radiation consulting company at the April, 2009 Board of Directors meeting. MJWTS also provides radiation detection instrument calibration and repair services in the United States and internationally. Moira is the majority shareholder of the company, which began in 2005. Moira began as a Director, was promoted to President in 2006 and then in April became Chairman.

1980's

Mary Beth Doyle (1980) writes: I'm the Department Chair of Education at St. Michael's College where I have had the opportunity to teach both undergraduate and graduate teacher education students. I also have had the

continued on page 10

opportunities to write and travel. On the home front, I have two grown step children and a five-year-old granddaughter. I'm always pleased to hear from former Mounties!

Mary Bagley (1984) became a certified Project Management Professional (PMP) in March 2008 and was recently appointed Director of Member Services of the Project Management Institute Buffalo Chapter.

Lisa Creed Wesolowski (1985) just recently moved back to Buffalo after working in Raleigh, North Carolina at the US Headquarter of GlaxoSmithKline with the Marketing team for Boniva. She worked on both professional and consumer marketing campaigns. Lisa will resume her position as a District Sales Manager for the WNY Respiratory team.

Lisa DiPalma Margeson (1987) and husband, Kevin, reside in Cheektowaga with their two boys, Brandon (10) and Matthew (8).

Tracy Koch Polisoto (1989) has been with Sanofi-Aventis Pharmaceuticals for 11 years and is currently in a job share position as an Executive Sales Representative.

Annie Deck-Miller (1989) received the President's Award at the Women's Bar Association of the State of New York Western New York Chapter annual installation dinner on September 24. Annie, managing editor of the Buffalo Law Journal and vice president of the MSM Board of Trustees, was honored for "her contributions towards the advancement of women in the law and in the local community." In her spare time, Annie has been singing back-up in a band fronted by former MSM music director Theresa Quinn, niece to former MSM Principal Sr. Mary Eileen Quinn.

1990's

Carrie Golombek Sullivan (1990) is the head librarian at the US Army Center of Military History in Fort McNair, Washington D.C.

Kristy Casale Saverino (1993) has received her Bachelor of Science degree from Niagara University in May 2008.

Rebecca Young Donoghue (1995) was named one of Business First's 2009 Women of Influence. Women of Influence awards recognize the business acumen and community spirit of Western New York women in 10 categories. Rebecca was recognized in the category of Non-Profit Leadership for displaying high energy and

skill in a leadership role at a nonprofit institution or organization.

Jessica Fortunate (1996) has been teaching for ten years and is currently teaching eighth grade ELA for the Wilson Central School.

2000's

Nicole Killian (2000) was accepted into the MFA program at Yale University and Cranbrook Academy of Art. She is planning to move to Michigan and attend Cranbrook this fall. Aside from school plans, Nicole completed her second marathon in January 2009 and will run another 26.2 miles straight at the Detroit marathon in October 2009.

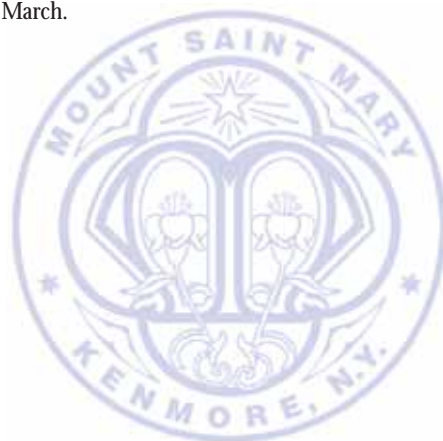
Theresa Najjar (2003) writes that she has enjoyed the past year working at MGH in Boston as a physical therapist, but is very excited because she just recently moved to California to be part of a one year Neurologic Physical Therapy residency Program through Kaiser Permanente. After the program, she will take an examination to become a Neurological Clinical Specialist in Physical Therapy.

Kristen Trigilio (2003) graduated with a Master of Science in Education degree with Literacy Instruction.

Katherine Meka (2004) graduated Magna Cum Laude from St. Bonaventure University with a B.B.A in Accounting and an M.B.A. She has taken a financial analyst position with J.P. Morgan Chase Bank in New York City.

Jaclyn Shaw (2004) is attending medical school at UC Berkeley-UC San Francisco. Jaclyn received her undergrad in Biological Sciences from Cornell University.

Kathryn Wolf (2004) graduated from Buffalo State with a degree in Communication in May 2008. She is currently working as a Collections Associate at Bank of America Home Loans. Kathryn just purchased her first home this past March.



Msgr. Francis Weldgen's Celebrates his 50th Anniversary!

On December 20, Msgr. Francis Weldgen celebrated his 50th anniversary as a priest. During the 50 years since his ordination, Fr. Fran has dedicated himself to the Mount St. Mary's community. If you attended the Mount between 1969 and 1986, you will remember the days when Fr. Fran served as our chaplain and lived in the priest's quarters behind the chapel. After he left the Mount to become the pastor at St. Christopher's parish, Fr. Fran continued to be devoted to the Mount. He has now returned to the school serving on our Board of Trustees and acting as our official chaplain, celebrating school masses and ministering to the spiritual needs of the MSM community. Earlier this year, Fr. Fran was made an Honorary Alumnus of Mount St. Mary's in recognition of his dedication and devotion to the school.

In honor of Fr. Fran's anniversary and in gratitude to him for all he has done for Mount St. Mary Academy, we have established the Msgr. Francis G. Weldgen Award, which will be given to an incoming freshman who has made serving others a priority in her life -- just as Fr. Fran has. If you would like to make a contribution to the Msgr. Weldgen Award, please contact the Development Office at (716) 877-1358 x. 415.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Fr. Fran and thank him on behalf of the thousands of Mounties and Sisters to whom he has ministered over the years. Please join us in thanking him and keeping Fr. Fran in your thoughts and prayers.



Msgr. Weldgen celebrates Thanksgiving Mass in the MSM auditorium.



Bobby Militello will perform at MSM

Buffalo Jazz Review at MSM

This year, Mount St. Mary Academy is very pleased to be hosting a special edition of the Buffalo Jazz Review. On Saturday, February 6, world-renowned musician Bobby Militello will be performing with the Mount St. Mary Academy Jazz Ensemble in the school's state of the art auditorium. Although Militello has played with the Jazz Ensemble before, this is the first time he will be performing at the Mount. Militello is a Buffalo native and has been performing worldwide for over 40 years. He has played with many famous groups and musicians, including the Dave Brubeck Quartet, Maynard Ferguson, and Rick James, and has even recorded songs with Motown Records. Militello specializes in alto saxophone, baritone saxophone, and flute.

Joining Militello and the Jazz Ensemble will be the St. Francis Jazz Ensemble, the Kenmore East Band, and the Sweet Home Band. The Jazz Review will begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be food, raffle theme baskets, and of course, wonderful music.

At 4:00 p.m., as a pre-show treat, Bobby Militello will be holding a clinic for the musicians in the visiting bands, as well as our own Jazz Ensemble. This is a fantastic opportunity for all involved to enhance their musical abilities and work with a professional musician.

Also participating in this clinic will be the famous musician Rich Thompson, a drum set player who received his Master of Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music. Thompson has played with bands such as the Tito Puentes Band, the Basie Band featuring Stevie Wonder, and the Buck Clayton Orchestra. He also founded the "Drum Set Day" program which allows young people to attend a day camp at the Eastman School. His help at the clinic will provide everyone in attendance with a wonderful learning experience.

To purchase tickets, please contact (716) 689-1100. Special pricing is available for alumnae!

2009 Baccalaureate Mass & Alumnae Awards

On May 19, 2009, the 2009 graduating class was officially inducted into the Alumnae Association. The Alumnae Association also presented three "Alumna of the Year" awards to members of its alumnae whose spirit and generosity has benefited those around them in a manner that exemplifies the values and traditions of Mount St. Mary Academy.

The following women were honored with the "Alumna of the Year" award:

Patricia Sheehan Evans (1949)
Penniston Rae Kieffer (1971), posthumously
Monica Saltarelli (1982)

The Association also handed out awards for "Honorary Alumnus of the Year" and "Volunteer of the Year." **Msgr. Francis Weldgen**, a member of the Academy's Board of Trustees and Academy chaplain, was presented with the "Honorary Alumnus of the Year" award. **Lisa Jakiel Baco (1978)**, an art teacher and chair of the Fine Arts Department at Mount St. Mary Academy, was honored as "Volunteer of the Year."

In addition, the Classes of 1949, 1954 and 1959 were honored with a special tribute as they prepare to celebrate this year their 60th, 55th and 50th anniversaries, respectively, of their graduation from Mount St. Mary Academy. The following alumnae from these special anniversary classes were in attendance:

Dolores Guarino Barbera (1949), Rita Flynn Walsh (1949), Camille Sperrazza Murphy (1949), Joan Stedem Keller (1949), Joan Lavin Kirkwood (1949), Betty Sabo Myers (1949), Leah Stephens Luhr Snyder (1949), Doris Papineau Cairns (1949), Suzanne Roth Vorburger (1949), Patricia Shehan Evans (1949), Donna Carney Spicer (1954), Elizabeth Rolling Erdman (1959), Carol Deinhart Jauch (1959), Mary Ann Ulanowski Kern (1959), Carol Fontane Pajonk (1959)



Members of the Class of 1949 are honored at Baccalaureate Mass.



Focus

MOUNT ST. MARY ACADEMY
3756 DELAWARE AVENUE
KENMORE, NEW YORK 14217

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Buffalo, NY
Permit No. 601

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Upcoming Events

For more information or tickets, please contact the Mount at 716-877-1358.



The Night of the Dragon

Reserve your ticket for the annual

Chrysalis Dinner and Auction Saturday, March 20

The evening includes silent and live auctions, sit-down dinner, open bar, valet parking and great company!

Co-Chairs: Elizabeth Reiser (1975), Mary Reiser Fiorella (1979), Anne Reiser Meegan (1985), Carol Reiser Maranto (1986)

Call 716-877-1358 x 306 to reserve your ticket
Seating is limited, so reserve now!

Also save the date for our Chrysalis Gift Parties:



**Alumnae Holiday
Open House**
December 28 at 7:00 pm
Sponsored by Diane Murray
Keefe (1977)

Bring a Christmas-themed gift
for our Chrysalis Auction.
Contact 716-877-1358 for details



**Ladies Night
Gift-Gathering Party**
January 12 at 6:00 p.m.
Sponsored by Lisa May
at Classics V

Open to all Ladies of the MSM
Community
Contact 716-877-1358 for details

Focus

*The Alumnae Newsletter of
Mount St. Mary Academy*

We welcome your comments!

Please send them to:

Focus

Mount St. Mary Academy
3756 Delaware Avenue
Kenmore, New York 14217



VISIT US ON THE WEB:

www.mt-st-marys.org
(716) 877-1358