



NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2002

PAST STUDENT'S ASSOCIATION

Message from Sr. Bernadette Au, Principal of St. Mary's Canossian College

Browsing through this year's school magazine, you will capture memorable moments of St. Marians who have gloriously reached their goals in academic pursuits and beyond the classroom achievements in various extra-curricular activities. Such moments make us relish our mission as teachers and educators. We cannot help gasping at how much God has bestowed upon our school and our students. Thank you God for such gifts!

The entire St. Marian family has never ceased envisaging and realizing our dream of nurturing effective thinkers and independent learners with deep personal values among our younger generations. The Middle Managers among the teaching staff explored at the first meeting this year the new approach to develop quality individuals - the Trinitarian Approach. It is the joint impact of the school curriculum, value and character building through school as well as personal development through extra-curricular activities beyond the classroom in this new era of a knowledge-based economy. The means to achieve the target is apparent in our curriculum. Through reading and Research-based Learning, for example, the capacity of our students in acquiring skills and knowledge is enhanced. We see a thinking and reflective person in a St. Marian. Via participation in extra-curricular activities, a quality St. Marian learns by doing. There are two elements added for a quality St. Marian in the next 5 years: communication skills and social involvement.



The President and Principal of St. Mary's Sister Bernadette Au

Our students share the same vision as the teaching staff. In a recent survey, students revealed their ideal profile of a quality St. Marian - one that they would eagerly like to be.

Let me quote:

"Reading is essential as it broadens our horizons..."

"We must engage ourselves in more activities outside the school and explore the world..."

Their ideal coincides with the schools.

As members of PSA, what do you see in our future? What input would you anticipate to put into empowering our younger family members in discovering their capacity and becoming a worthy member of the society?

Finally, let me end my message with a passage from the Book of Ecclesiastes:

"He has given us a desire to know the future, but never gives us the satisfaction of fully understanding what he does. So I realized that all we do is to be happy and do the best we can..."

Sister Bernadette Au
President of SMCCPSA

Message from the Chairman

Dear Members,

Despite a difficult financial situation in Hong Kong, the Association has had a successful year sharing with you social activities and cultural pursuit.

On 2 December 2001, our Annual Dinner cum Annual General Meeting was held at the City Hall Restaurant. I must admit that when we sent out circulars to you about this dinner, the Executive Committee was filled with trepidation as to the response for the dinner due to the economic downturn and the September 11 incident. The response from you however far exceeded our expectations. This reinforces my belief that we, St. Marians are blessed with good fortune.

In April 2002, the Association organized an outing to Tai Po, Sai Kung and Sha Tin with a sumptuous seafood lunch in Sai Kung as our activities on the Alumni Day 2002. We were glad that our President and Principal, Sister Bernadette was able to join us despite her busy schedules. Sister exchanged views and news with our members who were impressed with her zest and drive.

You will no doubt agree with me that our students are highly talented in dramatic skills as evidenced in the school plays produced by the school over the years. I now discover to my delight that the dramatic talent is only one facet of their multiple talents. Their talent for music is equally distinguished. The concerts given by our students in April 2002 were of very high standard. Well done, fellow St. Marians!

The Association was honoured to attend the Graduation Ceremony on 10 July 2002. We are proud of the achievements of our students in academic, cultural, artistic and sports activities in the past year. We are confident that

Last year I had the opportunity to take a year's study leave in England.

I did an MA in English Language Teaching at the University of Warwick - one of England's top universities. The course provided a good opportunity to gain insights into some of the latest ideas concerning language teaching as well as reconfirming many of my existing beliefs and practices.

My dissertation was a study of the English language learning benefits obtained through participation in drama and I would like to say a big thank you to all past (& present) students who completed the questionnaire and thus gave me valuable data on which to base my research.

As you all know, I have a strong belief that drama can be a very valuable learning medium and can provide students with so many opportunities to enhance their language, their learning and their lives. At Warwick University I was asked to introduce some of these ideas to the other students so

our students will successfully meet the challenges of the future as they have done over the years. At the Graduation Ceremony, I was surprised to find that Miss Mary Ho, our school librarian has reached retirement age. I could still remember Miss Ho dispensing advice to me on the choice of books on my frequent visits to the library in my school days. I wish Miss Ho happy retirement and all the best.

In this issue of the newsletter, we have articles from 3 Executive Committee Members who share with us their experiences and views on raising teenage daughters, continuous learning and delightful poems. Happy reading.

Upcoming Event

The Annual Dinner cum AGM which will be held on Sunday, 5th January 2003 at the Serenade Restaurant, Hong Kong Cultural Centre, Tsimshatsui. Please see the attached circular for more details. We look forward to seeing you at the Annual Dinner.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Exco Members who have expended both time and efforts for the success of the Association and our President, Sister Bernadette and teachers for their valuable guidance. Last but not least, I wish to thank you for your staunch support and participation in our activities.

Finally, we are approaching not only the end of the year but the start of the festive season. It remains for me to wish you and your families a very happy Christmas and success, prosperity and good health in the new year.

Yours sincerely,
Alice Lam
Chairman



now teachers from all over the world have heard of St Mary's, heard of our drama and heard our CD's. We are truly a leader in this field and course tutors and my fellow students expressed great enthusiasm and admiration for the work we have done - calling it inspirational and an example for all.

Now I am back in St Mary's and happy to be with you all again. Another drama is planned for this year, but at the time of writing the subject has not yet been chosen. This year I want to try and give more autonomy to the production team and to involve them more in the actual writing process if possible.

The production will be performed in Drama Week : 28 April - 3 May 2003

I look forward to seeing many of you there!

Mr. Jeff Oliver

I am delighted and flattered to have the opportunity to share my experiences of raising two teenage daughters with fellow St. Marians.

Nowadays, with the loosening attitudes towards sex and family values, it is not an easy task to be a mother, not to mention a mother with teenagers. For those contemplating to become a mother, believe me, it's a challenging job yet it gives me so much joy, pride, and of course responsibilities, thrills and miseries which come along with the package.

All parents have ambitious goals for their children. I am no exception. However, I feel that the most important thing is to raise our children with good moral values. We should set good examples because children usually model on their parents. I am sure our children will grow up the way we expected if we are honest, decent and caring.

I am blessed with two lovely daughters who are six years apart. I still remember when my elder daughter was a teenager; she made my life very miserable at times. Now that she has grown up and away at work in the States, I miss the loud, hideous music of Guns N Roses, her long hours in the bathroom, incessant phone calls and the piles of clothes as well as books forever strewn on her bedroom floor. I wouldn't mind tripping over dirty clothes and listening to the loud rock music if we could just go back in time. We had numerous heated arguments over curfew time, her allowance and insatiable requests for designer products. In hindsight, it amuses me that we could argue over so many things, which seem trivial now. Child experts often advise that we should avoid talking to each other when both sides are very angry as we might say nasty things, which we don't mean. But those words are sometimes our inner feelings and we get to know and understand each other more. Isn't there a saying which goes 'mother and daughter don't hold overnight grudges'?

I still have one teenager at home. Although my two girls are brought up in the same manner and environment, they have very different personality, likes and dislikes. The joy and miseries they give me in

their teenage years are so different. My younger daughter doesn't listen to heavy-metal music, and I am very grateful for that. It makes my life so much easier. She prefers classical music and the 'oldies' like the songs sang by Patti Page and Andy Williams. She is just as messy, so I still have to pick up clothes and magazines on the floor. There aren't many phone calls as she goes on the Internet and her friends all communicate through ICQ or MSN. It's amazing how modern technology has changed our pattern of life. So instead of telling her to get off the phone, I tell her to get off the Internet. She is beginning to develop very expensive taste, which terrifies me. It seems so quiet nowadays with only one girl around the house. I miss their silly fights and quarrels which I inwardly enjoy listening to because they remind me of my childhood years. My younger one has just attended her high school prom. When she stepped out of her room in her prom dress and high heels, I became very emotional and there was actually mist in my eyes. It then dawned on me that my little girl has also grown up. I fully cherish our time together because very soon she will follow her elder sister's footsteps and be ready to fly off. This time I am well prepared to cope with the changes.

I count it as a blessing that so far my two girls have no problems with drugs, friends and their schoolwork. They have no tattoos on their bodies and they don't wear those giant pants or hip huggies, tongue rings or belly rings which will definitely get on my nerves if they do. They always come home before curfew time and stay on the right track. So what more can I ask from them. Time really flies and before you realize it, it is time to break off and let go.

My dear St. Marians who have teenagers at home, I am sure with love, trust and understanding, you will get through those teenage years with no problems. Have fun!

Jeanne Leung
PSA Exco Member



Personal development through continuous learning

We live in a world of rapid changes, perhaps more so in Hong Kong than anywhere else. From a fishing port to an entrepot, from a labour-intensive industrial city to a world class financial and service center, Hong Kong has undergone tremendous economic transformations with great success, almost miraculously. What is the underlying force behind this success? And how can we leverage on the achievement to continue this success?

Where do we stand?

It is now common knowledge that the Hong Kong economy is undergoing structural changes. This is not new, as Hong Kong had undergone many changes in the past decades. What makes the turnaround more difficult this time is that we are moving into a knowledge-based economy. Our competitive edge can no longer be low prices, because there are plenty of developing countries willing to offer even lower prices. That is why the low-skill jobs are quickly disappearing into those countries, and the local unemployment rate continues to rise. So what we must aim for?

We talk about sustainable development and growth. The same applies to our products and service. We cannot maintain our market if our products or service is easy to copy or match. So there is no alternative but to aim at high quality, through continuous upgrading of our skills and knowledge, to meet changing needs. Our social mobility is among the highest in the world, and those who do not move along with the new demands will soon fall behind and eventually get displaced from the workforce.

What should we do?

In Hong Kong, the tertiary sector contributes more than 70% of the GDP. That is why human resource is the most important asset in any organization. How can we make sure that we are a real asset,

and not a negative equity, to our organization? Even the Hong Kong SAR Government, which used to provide 'iron rice bowls', is talking about greater cost-effectiveness. It is embarking on a long journey to streamline processes, to modernize management and to enhance productivity. So must all of us.

No longer can we be complacent with what we have (a certificate, a job, or even a relationship), because they are not there to stay if we are out of steps with subsequent developments. We must catch up, or better still, look forward and plan ahead. We must always equip ourselves to prepare for greater challenges, because they are sure to come. Learning opportunities are plenty, we can do it formally through institutions or we can update ourselves with readings or informal discussions.

In this era of information explosion, no one can claim that they cannot find the right materials. Nor can we claim that there is no time. It is just a matter of priority. Even tycoon Li Ka-shing can spare an hour each night updating his knowledge. This is his open secret of success, for he had received very little formal education. It is determination that counts.

So, start from today. Instead of watching soap series on the television, try read an article on new developments in your field. Instead of reading fashions or gossips, try a little meditation to see how you can improve your work. The results can be more rewarding than you expect. And we can bring this learning culture to those around us - to our staff, to our better half, and more importantly, to our next generation. For life will be real tough for them if they are not equipped for this ever changing world!

Clara Fung
PSA Executive Committee Member

*"Sister Bernadette,
St. Marians, their
families and friends
on Alumni Day 2002"*



SMCC

The calm autumn sun
warmly beamed from the cheerful sky
casting shadows on the familiar street corners,
embracing the youthful souls.
Submerged in thoughts I wandered
and left my destiny to my feet.
Turned away from the hassled avenues,
I strolled down memory lane
and arrived at the doorstep
of the elegant dame that have resided gracefully
at this busy junction for 100 years,
oblivious to the impatient traffic,
untouched by the change of scenery.

Outside, buses bellowed,
motorcycles roared.
Here, the grounds were quiet.
The air was crisp.
Everything was as it was,
as I knew it.
Birds chirped, leaves fell
giggles resonated in the air,
sanctified,
a sanctuary
nurturing the agile young minds,
shielding the innocent souls.
The sun grinned through the yellow leaves,
forming a golden casket
that proudly protects life's most simple treasures,
preserving the most valuable pleasures.

This is my cradle,
my guardian angel,
protecting me as I morphed
from baby to lady,
watching me as I shed my baby fat,
pop my pimples.

This is my ardent supporter,
cheering me on as I advanced
comforting as I failed,
Miss Ho, Miss Wong, Miss Chan
Mrs Lee, Mr. Cheung, Sister B.....
patiently guiding
generations after generations,
learning, growing, blooming,
forming their lives,
choosing their paths.

This is my beloved Alma Mater,
my dear 'old' friend,
the finest, grandest, one and only-----
St. Mary's Canossian College.



*"We had joy and we had fun
on Alumni Day 2002"*

BELIEVE

Life is difficult, full of disappointments, despair,
doubts, dilemma,
fears, frustrations,
insecurity, impermanence.
They say, we have to
be brave, be strong,
be wise, be optimistic,
be loved, be philosophical,
BELIEVE.
in ourselves.
Do we? Should we?
Can we?



"We are ready to greet you. Do join our Annual Dinner 2003"

REST

Sleep is the best therapy,
that is, if you can sleep at all.
When things get out of hand,
and future seems so out of reach,
stressed out, fatigued,
go to sleep.
Rest and forget it all.
Snoozing doesn't make them go away
but taking time to rehabilitate,
can cure, recover, pacify and heal.
Close your eyes,
let the mind drift.
slowly dozing,
falling asleep.....
Lost in dreams,
detached from the world.
Rested, awoke, pumped up, retrieved
come back, feel fit and move on.

Amy Yung
PSA Executive Committee Member