



St. Mary's Past Students' Association

NEWSLETTER February 2016

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Message from the Exco

Thank you for your support to the St. Mary's 115th Anniversary Dinner!

The SMPSA celebrated the 115th anniversary of our Alma Mater on 3 October 2015 by hosting the Anniversary Dinner which took place at Palace, The One, Tsimshatsui. Alumnae, friends and family were first invited to a campus visit in the afternoon where they could share reminiscence of their schooldays. Later in the evening they joined the



1,2,3.....selfie!

dinner which was unexpectedly embraced with heavy rainstorm and typhoon signal no. 3, adding a more extraordinary touch to an unforgettable evening!

Over 950 participants came for the function, packing the restaurant with 80 tables. We

were most delighted to meet many retired and current long-service sisters, teachers and staff of SMCC and SMCS, as well as graduates of all generations, some coming with their daughters or granddaughters who are all St. Marians! Amidst the delicious food served, participants busily engaged themselves in catching up with one another, and taking group photos or selfies – the time was never enough!



Cheers! Happy birthday to our Alma Mater!



Laughter filled the evening in every corner.



To our enthusiastic student helpers, a big THANK YOU!

We would like to sincerely thank the numerous hands and brains who contributed to make the celebration a success - teachers, school staff, student helpers, prize sponsors, volunteers, exco members etc. We also thank our guests for their active participation, making the event another fruitful evening of joy. May the Canossian spirit live on, and God bless St. Mary's!

You can relive the moments and see more photos on the PSA website.



SMPSA Executive Committee with our Patrons and Canossian Sisters

*(Back row, from left to right) Ms. Becky Lui, Ms. Angela Liu, Ms. Monica Wong, Ms. Petty Lai, Ms. Heidi Lee, Ms. Angela Leung, Ms. Jody Sin, Ms. Cindy Tsui, Ms. Ellie Wong, Ms. Annie Choi, Ms. Susanna Chung, Ms. Teresa You, Mrs. Queenie Mui, Ms. Rosa Zeng
(Front row) Sr. Veronica Fok, Sr. Bernadette Au, Ms. Justina Law, Ms. Janet Wong, Sr. Cynthia Chan, Sr. Virginia Wong, Ms. Maria Cheung, Sr. Marie Remedios, Sr. Theresa Chien, Ms. Mabel Leung*



SMCC Teachers

*(Back rows, from left to right) Sr. Veronica Fok, Ms. Meaco Kwok, Ms. Maryann Rowan, Ms Irene Yau, Ms. Jane Lau, Ms Diana Lee, Ms. Candy To, Ms. Ellen Tsang, Mr. Dominic Chan, Mrs. Sylvia Cheung, Mrs. Caroline Kwan, Ms. Helena Kung, Ms. Tammy Yeung, Mrs. Monica Lai, Mrs. Marilyn Yau, Mrs. Lau Wu Siu Lan, Ms. Evita Lai, Ms. Berenice Lau, Ms. Nancy Yum, Mr. Cyril Lee, Mr. Philip Lee, Mrs. Kapo Lee, Ms. Clare Pedron, Ms. Mabel Mak, Mrs. Queenie Mui
(Front row) Mrs. Winnie Hung, Mrs. Shirley Yip, Mrs. Simmy Wong, Ms. Sally Kwan, Sr. Cynthia Chan, Sr. Virginia Wong, Sr. Bernadette Au, Ms. Janet Wong, Ms. Catherine Wong, Ms. Amelia Tsang*



SMCS Teachers

*(Back row, from left to right) Ms. Rosa Zeng, Ms. Vicki Lau, Ms. Consa Kong, Mrs. Sarah Tchiang, Mrs. Grace Yu, Ms. P.C. Chan, Mrs. Jennifer Chan, Mrs. Ivy To, Mrs. Lucia Huen, Mrs. Christine Ng, Ms. Praxedes Law, Ms. Bernadette Lau, Mrs. Alice Wong, Mrs. Winifred Kam, Ms. Anne Mok, Ms. Frances Au Yeung
(Front row) Mrs. May Lee, Mrs. Josephine Chan, Mrs. Theresa Kan, Mrs. Mary Li, Sr. Virginia Wong, Ms. Maria Cheung, Mrs. Gabriella Loo, Mrs. Annie Lau, Mrs. Helen Lee, Mrs. Mary Chu*

Forty Years of Dedication – Miss Bernadette Lau

Those of us who were primary school students at St. Mary's since the mid-70s will not forget one most familiar yet mysterious face – Miss Bernadette Lau, school clerk of St. Mary's Canossian School (a.k.a. the primary section of St. Mary's Canossian College before the 1990s), who recently retired after four decades of service in the school.

Miss Lau, or 書記姐姐 as we usually addressed her in the past, is also a past St. Marian who graduated from Form 6 in 1973. “I have been a Canossian girl all my life – I spent my primary school days at Holy Family, then came to St. Mary's for secondary school, moving on to Sacred Heart for commerce course. I joined St. Mary's as school clerk in the primary school office in 1975,” Miss Lau took a walk down memory lane with us.



Greetings from Miss Bernadette Lau.

The Mystery behind the Office Counter ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀



Miss Lau in 1975 – when joining the school office.

We told Miss Lau that students always considered her mysterious, because she usually worked seriously in the office and seldom chatted with students. Miss Lau laughed and explained, “I was usually very busy those days as there was only one person working in the office!” She told us an interesting analogy. “During those times, I considered my office environment like a cross-cut mooncake, just imagine that I am at the centre, behind the counter. In the front, I handled enquiries from students and



Miss Lau in the primary school office in the late 70s.

teachers coming into the office. On my right, I operated the typewriter, while attending to the telephone on the left. The Headmistress' office was at my back. Many things happened at the same time. To avoid errors I had to stay focused. Hence I didn't have much time to chat with those who came into the office,” Miss Lau explained.

Times before Computers ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀



A snapshot of Miss Lau at her desk in the 80s.

Only one person working in the office with no computers? “Think of data management work, but handwritten. Remember the roll call register for every class? There were 30 classes with an average of 45 students per class, hence over 1,300 names to be written in the register books every year!” she laughed. While we were counting how many strokes there could be, Miss Lau continued to shock us. “Apart from this, the information on students' record cards also had to be copied and transferred to the new central filing system during 1980s by hand.

Forty Years of Dedication – Miss Bernadette Lau

And to top it all, there was the huge challenge from the Primary One entrance examinations -- there were over 2,500 applications every year, and each had to be processed by hand, copying their names and particulars!”

And this was just part of Miss Lau’s work for the first ten years. She was also in charge of typing out all school circulars, class notes, test and exam papers in English, running the mini library, maintaining proper inventory of school resources such as stationery supplies for classrooms and teachers’ rooms, and even those inside the toilets! And for those who still remember watching ETV (教育電視) in the comfort of our classrooms, Miss Lau was also responsible to tape the scheduled programmes for us. “If I took leave and missed a programme, the ETV lesson would have to be rescheduled,” she revealed. “I do have my footprints in every corner of the campus!”

The Amazing ‘Queen of the Office’ ◀◀◀◀◀◀

Our Patron Ms. Maria Cheung, Headmistress of SMCS, has been colleague with Miss Lau since 1979. “Miss Lau is an amazing person. She is quiet but she has great energy. She is totally dedicated to her work. The school operation and records have always been so smooth and organised, thanks to her efforts throughout the years. She set a solid foundation which paved the way for quality administration when extra headcounts were eventually available in the 80s, and computerisation after 2000. We still call her ‘Queen of the Office’



Ms. Maria Cheung and Miss Bernadette Lau in 1986 (left) and 2016 (right)...not much has changed!

because she is so familiar with everything,” Ms. Cheung gratefully shared. “Miss Lau is a manifestation of the true St. Marian spirit, to serve others to the best of one’s ability!”

”Although it was tough, I did enjoy my work,” added Miss Lau. “I liked the challenge of dealing with different problems, and I’m grateful that the Canossian Sisters had been very supportive. I also thank my colleagues for sharing many memorable moments with me over the years. We made great partners!” said Miss Lau emotionally. “I shall also miss our young St. Marians – these little ones are like blank sheets of paper, and they gain solid academic and spiritual growth during their stay at St. Mary’s. To my fellow colleagues, this is a very meaningful call, so do keep up your good work!” Miss Lau cheered on.

Happy Retirement ◀◀◀◀◀◀

While Miss Lau is sentimental to be leaving the campus, she is also excited that she can finally take on other hobbies, such as travelling. “I didn’t have much free time to take long vacations in the past, so I will certainly be planning some long trips in the future!” she laughed.

Miss Lau, thank you so much for giving your best to our Alma Mater during the past years. Happy retirement and God bless you in abundance.

Two Top DSE Students in 2015 – Vienna Chin & Sandra Wong

Over the Chinese New Year, we had the pleasure of meeting with Vienna Chin and Sandra Wong, the two top DSE students from St. Mary's who scored 5** in all seven subjects in 2015. They are now both first year undergraduates at the University of Hong Kong. Sandra is a Social Science major, while Vienna is in Medicine. Join us now to get to know a little more about these delightful girls, and see how they are doing in their post-secondary life.



Chinese New Year greetings from Vienna Chin (left) and Sandra Wong (right).

Friends since Form One

Sandra and Vienna were classmates in Form One. “I came to St. Mary's from a different primary school and Sandra was from St. Mary's. We became friends nonetheless,” said Vienna. “Coming to a new environment I decided that I should take the opportunity to experience more, so I went for class prefect election and became vice prefect. Since then I was either class prefect or vice prefect, and I really enjoyed the opportunity to serve others,” Vienna continued. “Yes, Vienna was more outgoing,” said Sandra. “I do remember voting for her then, although I forgot the reason already,” she said laughingly.

Identifying their own Interest

The two girls got into separate classes in Form Two and Three, and reunited since Form Four. “We were both in the Science class, and it was good to see each other again,” said Vienna. “We were then quite occupied with club activities and interschool competitions,” recalled Sandra. Both of them were members of the Maths Team, and had participated in the Hong Kong Mathematics Olympiad. “I find Mathematics very intriguing, and I enjoy solving problems in a logical and hands-on approach,” said Vienna. “Perhaps that's why I like the study of medicine, which requires a good sense of system and logic,” she shared. Sandra, however, had a different view. “I realised that I like human interaction more than numbers. Hence I am more interested in the science of psychology, and I look for opportunities to learn more about human behaviour,” she added.



Sandra was a frequent visitor to the school library.

Grateful to their Alma Mater

“We are sincerely grateful to the sisters and teachers at St. Mary's for teaching us good virtues and setting a solid foundation for our growth,” said Vienna. “Secondary school life is very important in character building and we are lucky that we have received good guidance,” she added. Sandra also shared words of encouragement. “We treasure our school days and would encourage current St. Marians to do the same. Take part in more activities where you will learn



Vienna having a quiet moment at school.

more about yourself. Talk to your teachers and listen to their suggestions. Then you can make informed decisions about your choices, and move out of your comfort zone in confidence,” she said.

Independence in University Life

Both Sandra and Vienna agreed that university life is very different from secondary school life. “One has to take much more initiative in university,” Sandra commented. “You are responsible for your own progress, and the lecturers are only there to give guidance,” she said. “You will not be told where to get the answers. Instead you have to analyse the question and find your own way to solve it. Fortunately, we can still talk to our seniors and get some hints from them if we are really stuck,” Vienna added with a chuckle.



Sandra as one of the Student Ambassadors of the University.

Aspiration and Preparation



Vienna conducting free health check service to needy elderly.

”I’m thinking of becoming a surgeon, and I need to start accumulating hands-on experience in dealing with real patients,” said Vienna. “That’s why I have signed up in the University as a volunteer to provide free health check service for underprivileged elderly people. I can train myself up while helping needy people, that’s really meaningful. I’m also applying for a short exchange programme this summer so that I can get some new experience and learn something more,” she added.

“I’d like to be a clinical psychologist,” said Sandra. “I need to have more interaction with different people and study their behaviour. Hence I’ve opted to be a Student

Ambassador for the University. This is a platform for me to meet various types of people and sharpen my senses. I will also consider exchange programmes so that I can learn about various cultures as well,” she shared.

We are pleased to see that both Sandra and Vienna are enjoying the new page in their life. We thank our cheerful scholars for their wonderful sharing, and wish them all the best in their future plans. Live St. Mary’s ever more!

SCHOOL DRAMA 2016 – “CHOICE”



Attention drama fans! The 2016 performance "CHOICE" will be coming to the stage during the Drama Week in mid-April. "CHOICE" is a musical play based on ideas suggested by the Core Production Team, written and directed by Mr. Geoff Oliver, and co-directed by past student Ms. Lorraine Ho. The story revolves around the fate of the surviving passengers of a sunken cruise ship. They are rescued by the original inhabitants of a strange island, but are put to a test. There are choices to be made.

The performances will be held at 7 pm in the *SMCC Hall* on *9 April (Sat), 11 April (Mon), 12 April (Tue), 15 April (Fri, Gala Night) & 16 April (Sat)*, and will last about 2 hours 10 minutes including one interval. Tickets are on sale, priced at *HK\$100**, *HK\$180**, *HK\$250* and *HK\$500*. For reservation please visit the school's website, or contact Ms. Queenie Cheng of the School Office at *2724 2771*.

** Prices not available on 15 & 16 April*

Farewell to Success Stationery



At the close of the Year of the Ram, after 46 years of accompanying generations of St. Marians, the Tse brothers at Success Stationery decided to retire and close the shop that had become one of the fixtures on Austin Avenue for nearly half a



century. On behalf of all St. Marians who had found help or located treasures at this unforgettable shop, members of the PSA Exco bid farewell to our dear friends, thanking them for all the good memories, and wishing them happy retirement and a new page in their life!

Thank you and goodbye from St. Marians!

In Loving Remembrance



Ms. Szeto Ching (司徒楨老師), teacher at St. Mary's from 1947 to 1981, returned peacefully to God on 11 September 2015 in Toronto, Canada, at the age of 93. Ms. Szeto started teaching in St. Mary's not long after WWII, nurturing St. Marians for over three decades as a teacher of Chinese and Mathematics. After her retirement in 1981, Ms. Szeto moved to Toronto and enjoyed a quiet life there. Ms. Szeto was gentle and knowledgeable, well-respected by her students and colleagues, and her love to St. Marians will forever leave a mark in the hearts of those she encountered.

~ Eternal rest grant unto her,
O Lord, and let perpetual
light shine upon her.
May she rest in peace.
Amen. ~



Ms. Szeto Ching

Class Reunion News

The **Class of 1965** held another 50th anniversary celebration in Hong Kong in November 2015. 25 schoolmates, including those from Canada, USA and Australia, with some seeing each other for the first time since graduation, joined the anniversary dinner where they shared old photos, laughed over childhood school events, and even chatted with friends in Toronto online. Other reunion activities included a visit to our Alma Mater, a day trip to Macau, and a reunion lunch with four teachers: Mrs. Simmy Wong, Miss Belinda Lo, Miss Tsang and Miss Gypsy Lee. Those interested to reconnect with the group please contact Teresa Yip at sbtse@yahoo.com.




The **Class of 1986** will have their 30th graduation anniversary reunion held on 1 July 2016 (Friday). Teachers and classmates are invited. Please contact Anna Au at annaauhk@gmail.com for more details.


Organizing a reunion for your class? Let our Membership Secretary know and we can include your news on the newsletter and the website. Email to membershipsec@stmaryspsa.org.



Alumnae Day 2016



The PSA is delighted to announce that the Alumnae Day this year is scheduled on 3 December 2016 (Sat). With the support from school management, the campus will be open on the day and past St. Marians can invite friends and family to visit your Alma Mater! Details of other planned activities during the day will be announced in the next issue of the newsletter, so please mark the date now, and stay tuned for more update!



Notice of the 2016 Annual General Meeting of St. Mary's Past Students' Association

Date : 12 March 2016 (Saturday)

Time : 3:00 pm

Venue : Geography Room, 2/F Marian Building

All members are welcome!

Agenda:

1. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2015 Annual General Meeting held on 21 March 2015
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year ending 31 August 2015
4. Any Other Business

Proxy Forms can be downloaded from www.stmaryspsa.org.



Thank you for your continuous support to the PSA.

The ExCo wishes you and your family a Happy Year of the Monkey!
