



THE SHAMROCK

ST. PATRICK PARISH & ALUMNI NEWS

VOL. 19 NO. 1 FALL 2007

ST. PAT'S SCHOOL FACES TOUGH TIMES

This is the third in a series of articles that has told the story of St. Patrick School through its first 100 years. In previous issues of The Shamrock you read about the first sixty four years of school history. Times were good during those first six decades, and, attendance was high. Catholic Schools across the nation were bursting at the seams. However, as the sixties came to a close many storms were brewing on the horizon, storms that would change the face of Catholic education dramatically. In 1970 Portland St. Pat's was hit broadside by those storms.

As the 1960's drew to a close, no one in Portland had an inkling that St. Patrick's School would soon face changes and challenges unlike any that it had seen in its first sixty four years of existence. Society was changing; women were leaving their homes for the workplace; the arrival of "the pill" meant smaller families---even in Catholic homes. Meanwhile, Vatican II which had convened earlier in the decade had brought about changes within the Church, changes which made Catholicism more open to modern influences. One of the most striking influences was the changing role of Catholic nuns. Many left their orders, and the ones who stayed were no longer limited to careers as teachers and nurses, they were instead encouraged to go out into the world and work in other ministries.

Early in the spring of 1970, the people at St. Pat's received startling news that because of dwindling numbers within their order, the Sisters of St. Joseph would not be returning to the classrooms in the fall. The Sisters had been there since 1906, and students and parents

alike were horrified at the thought that they would not be back. Under the leadership of teacher, Gina Brooks, they quickly and efficiently organized a bus trip to Nazareth, Michigan to plead for a different decision.

Though the emotional trip showed the camaraderie of the students and the depth of their attachment to the Sisters, it had no effect on the decision-makers at Nazareth. In June of 1970, the nuns did indeed permanently depart from Portland, leaving a dozen classrooms at St. Pat's without teachers for the fall.

Fr. Stephen Kolenic, in a Sunday sermon that spring, matter-of-factly stated that the high school would close at the end of the year. Father Kolenic was supported by a group of parishioners who accepted his premise that the parish could not afford to operate a school full of lay teachers.

However, an even larger group within the parish disagreed. That group sought Diocesan intercession and vowed to do everything within their power to save their beloved school. That summer, the

first School Board was elected with the goal of keeping the high school open for at least five more years.

The goal was easy to set, but the task ahead was huge. Lay teachers needed to be hired to fill all of the existing vacancies; the cost of employing lay teachers would be very expensive compared to what the nuns had been paid; tuition would have to be increased to cover the costs. And, to make their job even more difficult, the new school board members felt like they didn't have the power to make any decisions. The decisions had always been made by the pastor, and old habits don't die easily.

Memories are a little hazy about the exact series of events that occurred that summer. Many people still think that Monsignor Zerfas exerted the influence that led to a pastoral change at St. Pats. In August of 1970, Fr. Kolenic was replaced by Father Joe Malewitz. Fr. Malewitz had been the Associate Pastor at the parish a few years earlier, serving under Father Flohe, and was an ar-

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Mail Call

Dear Shamrock,

I was more than a little saddened when I read that Unk Schaffer had passed away. He was a great guy and a very good friend. He excelled in football, baseball and basketball.

I first played football at Portland High in my sophomore year. At 135 pounds I was pretty light, but my years of running the hills along Market Street gave me a strong pair of legs. Unk was our 190 pound full back. I made the first team as left guard. When we needed 3 or 4 yards for a first down or a touch-down, the play called was either 91 or 92. Ninety one was through my position. It was my job to get the opposing guard out of the way. Back then you could not use your arms for anything but pushing. If you were caught grabbing the opponent, it was a 5-yard penalty for illegal use of the hands. If the opposing guard came at you really low, all you could do is fall on top and hold him down. In that case, Unk had no choice but to run over you...all 190 pounds of him! He always got the necessary yardage!

More than once, as I walked into the showers after the game, I was told that I had cleat marks up my back---small black and blue spots! Believe it or not, I was proud of them.

Back in the late 30's, many merchants in town sponsored fast pitch softball teams. I played on the Barley Earhart team. I don't remember what team Unk was on. The last year I played, at the end of the season, Unk met me on the street. "I've been looking for you," he said.

"There has been a medal awarded for the highest batting average and you and I are tied." We both had a .500 average.

Unk had been told that since there was only one medal, we would have to cut cards to see who got it. The first cut I drew a 2 and Unk had a Jack. Of course, Unk said, "Let's make it two out of three."

I drew an 8 and Unk drew an Ace, so I said to him, "It's all yours. Congratulations."

Those were the days!

*Phil Koelzer
8th Grade Class of 1936*

Dear Shamrock,

Thank you for allowing me to write your Guest Editorial column in the spring issue of The Shamrock. I thought I'd let you know what is happening, here in South America now.

After spending six months in Cochabamba learning Spanish, Dawn and I are now finally able to do the missionary work that we came to South America to do. We arrived in Okinawa, Bolivia on June 18th. We were held back in Cochabamba a little longer than planned because Dawn had some digestive problems caused by amoeba and giardia. Come to find out, the little bugs had also found a home in my body, but my stomach no longer reacted to them. How exciting!

When we finally arrived in the tiny village of Okinawa, we literally had to check the map to be sure we

were still in Bolivia. Apparently, after WWII a group of Japanese settled in Bolivia, founding Okinawa 1, 2, & 3. So, all of the signs, cooking utensils and one restaurant are 100% Japanese. And, the houses that the Japanese live in are straight out of Beverly Hills...mixed in with the thatched roofed houses of the Bolivians. It's a very different world!

Dawn and I live in two little houses connected by a back porch. Each of us has our own kitchen, bath and bedroom but only one fridge and one working oven. We have to wash our clothes by hand, line dry them, boil our water for drinking, shower with electric showers whose wires are exposed, and kill bugs bigger than we even knew existed! However, we also get to run in the morning and watch the sun rise over the fields, where if I didn't know better, I'd swear I was back in Portland. Sugar cane stalks look surprisingly similar to cornstalks! We also are able to sit on our back porch and watch the sun set over palm trees and enjoy orange juice fresh-squeezed from the trees in our back yard.

I can honestly say that this is the most challenging thing that I have ever done. One of my greatest struggles has been teaching. I have learned quickly that I am not cut out to be a teacher! Dawn and I teach English to 10th graders and computers to 8th graders. That doesn't sound too bad, does it? But, we are working without any books, without any record of what these kids have already learned, without computers that really work. We have no overhead projectors and no school supplies. Also, neither of us has any previous teaching experience and have learned that we

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In The Spotlight

Norman E. Goodman

Eighteen months ago we spotlighted Lance Corporal David Huhn, a home grown hero who gave his life in Iraq. Many people don't remember that Portland was home to another hero who thirty-eight years ago also died for his country. It is tragic that it has taken such a long time for the Vietnam veterans to be recognized and honored for their sacrifices. In May 2007 a Veteran's Memorial Wall was erected in Portland, and one of the names on that wall is former St. Patrick student SP4 Norman Goodman who died in 1969.



While Norm Goodman was growing up on a farm in Portland, Michigan, no one thought of him as a hero. He was the fifth of seven children of George and Dorothy Goodman, and probably got lost in the crowd, as middle children often do. But there were a few things that set him apart from his siblings or the other kids in the neighborhood. In addition to doing his regular farm chores, Norm could also be counted on to help his mother in the kitchen as she prepared what must have seemed like an endless amount of meals to feed her hungry family. His sense of humor often came out in the kitchen, with his mother the target of harmless practical jokes. He would hide things from her, just to watch her scurry around trying to find them, and feign complete innocence when those "lost" objects reappeared, exactly where she had left them.

Norm also had a special way of looking out for his younger brother and sister. He shared his time, his toys, and even his car. "There aren't too many boys who would let their sister borrow their car on her 16th birthday," recalls brother, Gene. "But, that's the kind of kid that Norm was."

Summer evenings in the country, after chores were finished, meant neighborhood games of Kick the Can or Eeny Iney Over. Norm was the organizer for those games, as well as frequent card games or a good game of baseball.

From first through eighth grades Norm was a student at St. Patrick's, transferring to PHS for his high school years. There he was involved in FFA, Woodworking and Auto Mechanics. He worked after school at Dick's Standard Station, and Dick always told people that Norm was the only employee who could clean his uncle's car to satisfy him. After graduation Norm was hired at TRW as a machine operator and soon had saved enough money to buy a 1963 Chevy two-door hard-top. It was his pride and joy!

In August of 1967 Norm enlisted for a three year stint with the United States Army. He completed six months of training and in February of 1968 headed off to Vietnam for a one-year tour of duty. Norm was placed in the 18th Engineering Brigade Group working with heavy equipment to build roads and bridges to assist our troops. Nights he often pulled guard duty, just like the rest of his fellow soldiers.

He often used his guard duty time to write letters home—his only way of communicating with family. Mail was slow, and letters often took weeks to be delivered, but Norm was very good at sending news and pictures of the things he was doing in Vietnam.

In January 1969, less than one month before his tour of duty was scheduled to end, Norm had a few days off and was enjoying an R & R with his friends. Enemy snipers ambushed them and Norm was killed as he slept.

St. Patrick's Church overflowed with family and friends on the day of his funeral. It was a fitting tribute to the little boy who sat in those pews for so many years. The little boy who willingly went off to war and gave his life for his country.

Would You Like To Honor Someone In This Space?

If you would like to honor a special person by putting them *In the Spotlight*, contact The Shamrock. You can write the article yourself, if you're comfortable doing that, or provide the information and photo and we'll do it for you. Contact information can be found on page 18.

What's Happening?

BIRTHS

To Brent (1993) and Dawn Goodman of Eagle, a daughter, Kylie Elizabeth on March 13, 2007.

To Jarrod and Brenda (Snitgen, 1991) Leonard, a daughter, Amber Nicole on March 15, 2007. She joins two brothers, Kyle and Ryan.

To Scott and Christel (Lawrence, 1991) Lanz, a daughter, Lola Jean on March 22, 2007. She joins two sisters, Allison, 12 and Brooke, 9.

To Eben and Krystal Krausz, a daughter Raina Beth on March 27, 2007.

To Bill and Jennifer (Fedewa, 1992) Schick of Grandville, a daughter, Allison Beverly on April 8, 2007. She joins siblings, Jessica, 3 and Tommy, 2.

To Bob (1990) and Laurie Pung, a daughter, Gillian Kelly on April 17, 2007. She joins one sister, Paige, 3.

To Brian (1996) and Becki (Stopczynski, 1994) a son, Keagan Gerard on May 26, 2007. He joins siblings, Bryson, 5 and Adriana 3.

To Mike and Casie (Wilcox, 1992) Bayless, a son Keaton Charles on June 19, 2007. He joins sisters Mikenna, 4, Kaelyn, 3 and Camrie, 1.

To Burt (1995) and Stacy Brown, a daughter, Annabelle Ryan on June 20, 2007.

To Jeff (1997) and Dawn Fedewa of Sunfield, a daughter, Kenzie Joan on July 2, 2007. She joins one brother, Alex.

To Kerry (Pung, 1992) and Jeremy Walter of Wyoming, a son, Trevor Dale, on July 20, 2007. He joins one sister, Taylor, 13 months.

To Angela (Platte, 1992) and Samir Rabahat of Phoenix, Arizona, a son, Matthew Masoud on July 22, 2007.

To Kirk (1994) and Demarah Densmore, a son, Caleb James on July 30, 2007. He joins two sisters Hannah, 7 and Olivia, 4.

To Pete and Erika (Stiffler, 1999) Hoppes, a daughter, Emma Marie on August 3, 2007. She joins one sister, Maya, 14 months.

To Mark (1997) and Katie Meyers, of Lyons, a son, Bradley Daniel on August 3, 2007. He joins one brother, Mark, Jr. 22 months.

To Chris (1996) and Jenny Vallier, a son, Mason Kurt on August 3, 2007. He joins siblings, Cade, Charlie and Molly.

Readers tell us that the What's Happening pages are the first ones they read when their newsletters arrive. Be sure to let us know What's Happening in *your* life, so that we can let your friends know!

To Andrew (1995) and Jennifer Huhn, a son, Ian Edward on July 9, 2007.

To Tom and Jenny Little, a daughter, Cecelia Maren on June 28, 2007.

To Vicky (Beard, 1988) and Mike Vargas of Clarkston, a son, Thomas Michael on August 13, 2007. He joins siblings Brennan, 8 and Madeline, 5.

To April Baker and Jason Miller, a son, Austin Russell. He joins one sister, Amber Renee, 2 ½. April is the daughter of Pete and Sandy (Fedewa, 1978) Baker.

ENGAGEMENTS

Susan Theuerkauff (1998) and Cameron Wassman will be married on November 17, 2007 at Mount Pleasant Sacred Heart Church.

Troy Smith (2002) and Cortney Roberts will be married on August 2, 2008.

Kellie Lay (2004) and Brad Leonard will be married on June 28, 2008.

WEDDINGS

Joe Supina (1986) and Christina Cazan were married on December 16, 2006 at the Inn of St. John in Plymouth. Fr. Karl Pung officiated at the ceremony.

Correy Selden (1995) and Amanda Adams were married at Fallsburg Park on May 26, 2007.

Angela Fox (1998) and Michael Kolp were married on June 2, 2007.

Tonya Peabody (2002) and Brandon Guilford were married on August 25 at Liberty Church in Grand Ledge.

Joe Majinska (2002) and Corrie Dinehart were married on September 8, 2007.

ANNIVERSARIES

Dan and MaryJo Schneider celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary with a trip to Peto-skey and Brimley. The couple was married on April 8, 1967 at St. Patrick's.

James and Josephine Fox celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on June 17. They were married in 1957 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Westphalia.

Tom and Loretta Schelter celebrated their 30th wedding anniversary on June 18, 2007.

Bill and Helen Clark celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with an open house and dinner. The couple was married on January 26, 1957 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Westphalia.

Bob and Janet Pasikowski celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on April 29, 2007 with a family gathering.

Jack and Eloise Gilbert celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in

April with a party hosted by their children and grandchildren.

Bill and Anne Eddy celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on September 7. The couple were married on September 7, 1957 at Portland St. Patrick's Church.

COLLEGE NEWS

Christin Russman (1998) graduated magna cum laude from the University of Hawaii on May 11, 2007 with a master of communication degree.

Jami Schneider (2003) graduated from Marietta College on May 19, 2007 with a bachelor of arts degree with a major in management.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Gary Hattis (1970) earned the Platinum Level Photographer of the Year Award in an international competition sponsored by the Professional Photographers of America. Gary is one of only two photographers in Michigan and one of only 27 worldwide to receive this high level of recognition.

Al and Karla Schrauben were selected by the Portland Area Chamber of Commerce to be the Grand Marshals of the 2007 Portland Independence Day parade.

IN MEMORY OF

Byron K. Kincaid, 84, died on March 4, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Blanche, four sons, Byron, Mike, Tom and Steve, three daughters, Patricia, Deb and Sue, 15 grandchildren and 16 great-grandchildren.

Gregory E. Thelen, 84, died on March 27, 2007. He is survived by seven sons, Bill, Russ, Jim, Wayne, Barry, Tony and Andy, two daughters, Rosemary Beard and Janet Thelen, 31 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, one brother and one sister.

Dorothy A. Barker, 86, died on March 29, 2007. She is survived by two sons, Charles and Donald, four grandchildren, two brothers and two sisters.

Betty L. Thelen, 86, of Sunfield, died

on March 30, 2007. She is survived by two sons, Charles and Richard, two daughters, Mary Ann Gardner and Susan Jones, many grandchildren and great-grandchildren and one sister.

Phyllis I. Spitzley, 82, died on May 1, 2007. She is survived by her son, James, four grandchildren, one brother and two sisters.

Robert A. Lawless, 82, died on May 9, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Mary Alice, one daughter, Sandy Hyland, four sons, Larry, Ken, Tom and Steven, 14 grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, two step-daughters, four step-grandchildren and two brothers.

Francis R. Trowbridge, 69, died on May 14, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Agnes, two sons, Howard and Tony, four grandchildren, one brother and one sister.

If you have loved ones who are living in adult care facilities, please let us know. We'd like to publish their names and addresses so that old friends can visit or send cards.

Catherine M. Frazee, 80, died on June 6, 2007. She is survived by three sons, Gerald, Leo and Ron, one daughter, Linda Barnes, 15 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and one sister.

Leon M. Hoppes, 82, died on June 7, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Jerry, four daughters, Judy Huhn, Connie Smith, Cathy Klein and Nancy Sharp, one son, Ken, ten grandchildren, three great-grandchildren, one sister and five brothers.

Bryan Piggot, 61, of Gambrills, Maryland, died on July 1, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Cathy, a daughter, Erica, two grandchildren, his mother, Carol Rumisek, three brothers, Terry, Dale and Ron and three sisters, Maureen Piggott, Monica Almy and Sharon Martin.

John V. Byrne, 86, of Milton Florida died on July 4, 2007. He is survived by sons, Jack and Tom, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and one great-great grandson.

Patricia J. Pohl, 64, died on July 13, 2007. She is survived by her husband, Edward, one son, Pete, two daughters, Kim Pohl and Sherry Bracy, three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and three brothers.

Daniel J. Painter, 23, died on July 20, 2007.

Marie (Schneider) Goodman, 82, died on August 5, 2007. She is survived by four daughters, Ann Rademacher, Susan Wenstrom, Karen Marshall and Kayla Hengesbach, ten sons, Bob, Jim, Tom, Don, Doug, Roy, Phil, Paul, Larry and Russ, 32 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, three brothers and two sisters.

Harold Martin, 82, died on August 14, 2007.

Christopher (Christy) Fandel, 78, died on August 16, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Helen, two sons, Frank and Rod, four daughters, Derry Hoppes, Rhonda Schrauben, Marlys Spohn and Teresa Longanbach, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren and two sisters.

Frederick A. Smith, 68, died on August 23, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, two daughters, Wendy Malpas and Robin Benham, two sons, Mark and Joe, seven grandchildren, one great-grandchild, two brothers, Dave and Tom, and three sisters, Mary Pepsau, Barb VanWormer and Rose Barrett.

Paul E. (Pinky) Rademacher, 54, died on August 25, 2007. He is survived by his wife, Anne, two children, Tracy and Aaron, one sister, Marie Cooper and one brother, Bob.

Mary C. Peake, 87, died on September 8, 2007. She is survived by two daughters, Julie West and Betty Leyrer, two grandchildren, and two brothers, Arnold Simon and Harold Simon.

Marian E. Logel, 90, died on September 11, 2007. She is survived by her children, Linda Smith, Mary Jo Browers and Doug Logel, ten grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and one sister, Helen Sheski.



NOTES FROM THE SISTERS

It is 4:00pm on Friday, August 31st and our high school students have just completed their first week of our new academic year. Before the end of our school day today, during homeroom, (homeroom is new this year) I had the opportunity to say thank you to our students for making the beginning of our school year a great success. Not only do our students look terrific in our new dress code, but they have displayed a wonderful spirit of cooperation and a positive attitude for all the wonderful blessings that I am sure will be a part of this new school year.

On the first day of school I met with each grade level to say thank you for two things. I thanked each student for returning to St. Patrick School because our future begins now as we work together to grow our high school enrollment. I also thanked each grade level for their appearance and their positive response to our new dress code.

Our high school faculty has had a great week preparing all students for the important work that lies ahead and all systems are go for a great year.

We will continue to ask God's blessing on our ministry to educate the young men and women we are proud to call our St. Patrick High School faith community.

*Sister Maureen Field, IHM
St. Patrick School Administrator & Supervisor*

It was wonderful to see the elementary students walk into school for another school year on Tuesday, September 4th. All students looked great in the new school dress code and it was evi-

dent that students were happy to see one another and they were excited to see their classroom teachers.

The theme of our new Religion textbook series for our 2007-2008 school year is WE GATHER, WE BELIEVE, WE RESPOND. Our theme was certainly evident during the first week of school as we watched our elementary students "gather" for the beginning of a new school year in classrooms, playground, gym, and in the cafeteria. As the youngest members in the faith community, it was evident that our students do "believe" in the presence of God within our school faith community as they rejoiced when they saw one another and classroom teacher throughout the school day.

We are indeed grateful for the way our elementary students have "responded" to our new dress code, they truly look wonderful. We look forward to an outstanding school year as we continue to ask our Lord's blessing upon all that we do to educate the wonderful children who have been entrusted to our care.



The Pearson girls look sharp in their new school uniforms.

*Sister Patricia Ann Kidder
St. Patrick School Principal*

A WARM SHAMROCK WELCOME TO NEW FACULTY MEMBERS!

Mr. Brian Spitzley is our new Religious Studies teacher for grades 9-12. Mr. Spitzley is a graduate of Madonna University where he received a Bachelor of Theological Studies Degree in Sacred Theology. Mr. Spitzley was married in June and resides in Fowler.

Mr. Paul Osbourne is our new math teacher for grades 9-12. Mr. Osbourne is a graduate of Aquinas College and received a Bachelor of Science major in Mathematics and a minor in Physics and Theology. Mr. Osbourne will teach Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry and Pre-Calculus. Mr. Osbourne resides in Portland.

Mrs. Lyndsay Lucas is our new school Guidance Counselor. Mrs. Lucas received her Bachelors Degree

from Aquinas College and a Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling from Western Michigan University. Mrs. Lucas resides in Sand Lake, Michigan.

Mrs. Dana Platte is our new Pre-Kindergarten teacher. Mrs. Platte is a graduate of Aquinas College and received a Bachelors Degree in Early Elementary Education. Mrs. Platte has three children and resides in Westphalia.

Mr. Nick Lawless is our new Physical Education teacher. He will teach all the elementary classes as well as the 9th grade physical education class and the senior Health, Wellness and Fitness class.

NEW WEBSITE PROVIDES ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

If you haven't checked out St. Pats new website, please do so at www.portlandstpats.com. It's full of information every parent needs and wants to know including—

- Teacher Email Addresses/Phone Numbers
- Athletic Schedules and Pictures
- Graduation Requirements
- Dress Code
- Father Flohe Foundation Info
- PTO
- Before and After School Care
- Pre-School
- Day Care
- Upcoming Events
- Tuition Schedule
- Worker Benefit Program

The list goes on and on! Our recent addition is the High School Handbook – a great, comprehensive document which addresses a wide array of educational issues/policies at St. Patrick. The Elementary Handbook will also be posted as soon as it's available. And don't forget to read the Reflections from Sister Patricia Ann and Sister Maureen on the homepage!

Please check out the site and visit it often as information is added frequently. If there's anything you would like to see on the site please use the Contact Us link and send an email!

www.portlandstpats.com

ST. PAT'S STUDENT FEATURED IN DIOCESAN MAGAZINE

St. Patrick senior Annalise Kranz was featured in the August issue of the Grand Rapids Diocese Faith Magazine. The article, entitled *Teen Answers Call to Church and Community* features Annalise sharing her personal journey of faith. Annalise states in her interview that when she faces obstacles to her faith she relies on her friends and classmates at school who have been a great encouragement to her.

A link to the article can be found on the school website, www.portlandstpats.com>Archived Reflections 9/6.

SHAMROCK SCHOLAR NEEDS YOUR HELP

For the fifth straight year, St. Patrick is launching the Shamrock Scholar Tuition Raffle. This raffle is an exciting and innovative way to emphasize the importance of a Catholic education. The raffle winner can apply the top prize towards any Catholic education. This fundraiser continues to be a very successful and profitable venture for St. Patrick's, but only because of your contributions.

We need your help in donating the top prize that truly makes this fundraiser the achievement that it has become. This gift of generosity will truly embody the spirit of our school and fulfill our call of stewardship. While being a significant sacrifice, this act of charity will directly and immediately benefit the St. Patrick community.

The donation of the top prize of \$2000 is an extremely important investment in the future of a wholesome, spiritual and rewarding educational experience. Our gratitude cannot be conveyed enough for the contribution of the top prize last year by Mike and Sue Fox and Roni (Lehman) Christmas. This year we need *your* help!

If you would be willing to donate this top prize or have questions, please contact Laurie Hill at (517) 647-2209. The top prize must be confirmed by October 19, 2007. Even if you are not able to donate the top prize, please support Catholic education by purchasing a raffle ticket. Thank you for your continued support of the Shamrock Scholar Tuition Raffle.

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YOUTH GROUP

Mission Trip 2007

by Noelle Garcia, Youth Leader

St. Patrick Youth Group represented the parish exceptionally well during our Mission Trip to Memphis, Tennessee, which was both a huge success and a beautiful labor of love. The long drive was worth it, as the group learned not only a way to serve others, but also to serve one another, work together, and love past first impressions.

Sunday, April 1st (April Fools Day) began with a hilarious plan thought up by the chaperones to play a trick on the kids. We told them that there was a head lice problem at the retreat center, and all students needed to immediately go to their rooms and bring down all sleeping bags, blankets and pillows. As soon as this was done, we instructed the students to begin checking each other's heads for lice. The joke was a good one, but they did manage to get some of us back at the end of the week--one chaperone's shoes ended up in saran wrap on a ceiling fan!! I have to say, though the youth tried... the chaperones won!

Although we had a lot of fun, we also worked very, very hard. Sunday we headed out to Mother Teresa's order of Missionary Sisters of Charity, where the Sisters put everyone to work. The Sisters said that they had never seen a more beautiful group of students, because the students got right to work and rarely waited for someone to tell them what to do. I knew that this was going to be a good week!

Monday was adventurous. Some of us spent the afternoon in the hospital after a student cut her arm with a rusty saw and had to get a tetanus shot! The students also experienced thankless service. As they were picking up trash in a neighborhood, a man started yelling and throwing his own trash out into the street. While the students were sweating away and cleaning up the neighborhood, able-bodied men simply stood around and watched. This is an example of TRUE service---service without reward. The group also went to the Civil Rights Museum to gain an understanding of the cultural divisions still present in Memphis.

Tuesday was a memorable day, as we met Ms. Etta. Our project was to clean up two houses. One house was in such deplorable condition, that the chaperones had to tell the students not to pick up any trash---to let the chaperones handle it! The other house was burnt out and no front. Ms. Etta



St. Pat's Youth Group in front of the mural they painted on one of the buildings that they helped repair in Memphis, Tennessee in April.

told the kids stories of her involvement in the Civil Rights Movement. This was history come alive to all of us. She told of how her community used to be beautiful and filled with family values. But the succeeding generations had not held these ideals and let the neighborhood fall apart. The group boarded up the house, and another group of students painted a beautiful mural over the boards. Ms. Etta asked a professional photographer to take pictures of

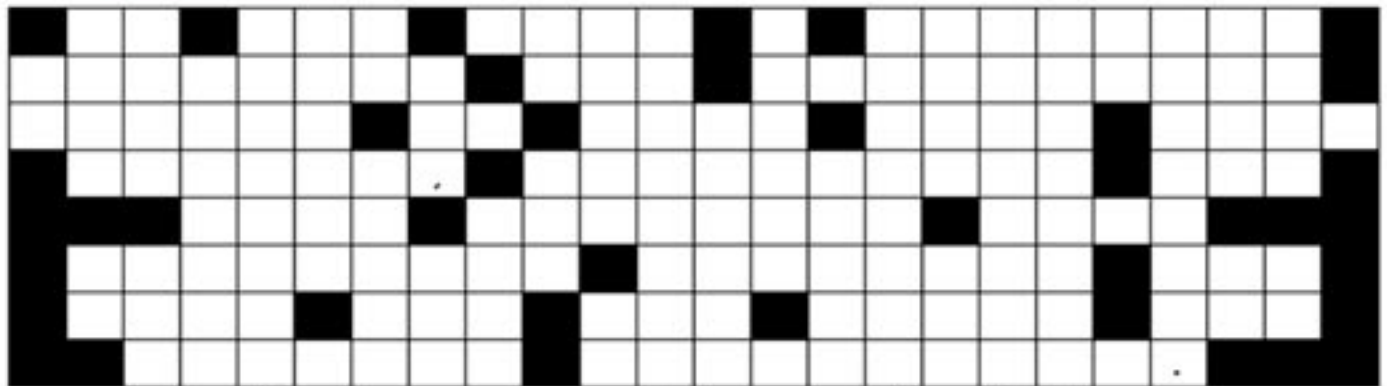
the mural and hopes to get them in the local paper. Ms. Etta touched the hearts of the kids as much as they touched her heart. She said she hated to see us go, but if we come back next year, we're all invited to a neighborhood barbecue!

Wednesday, we cleaned up a creek in a neighborhood, which ended up being very light work, but a

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This puzzle format is called Fallen Phrases. An inspirational quotation has been fit into the diagram below, but you'll have to rearrange the letters to find it. Look at each column of letters vertically and distribute them into the empty squares directly above. The black squares show you the spaces between the words in the poem, and please note the punctuation marks are already in place. Do not put letters in the squares that contain those marks. Good luck!



D R A Y I

G W Y R Y G P O N O U E I

E I F V A I O A E N E L P O D S F O U

I F N T E D A R A V D E T U E E T O Y V S

I M I E O U T U A C H A O R E N G Y U R L D

F F I O D T O H E V R V L O L A M Y S A E R

A T R M I L L E T V E I C A B Y S S A T B N E

S T T R E U T E O E N E R C M E L L R N T O Y T

ANSWER TO SPRING PUZZLE

The spring puzzle was a Word Search, and a LOT of readers sent in their entries! Naturally, every single entry had the correct answer, because Shamrock readers are among the best and brightest! The quote that was hidden within the puzzle was:

DELEGATING WORK WORKS, PROVIDING THE ONE DELEGATING WORKS, TOO!

The winner, whose name was randomly drawn from all of the correct entries was Joyce Strang. She received the cash prize of \$50.

Thanks to all who entered, good luck with this puzzle!

ENTRY FORM AND RULES

Send this entry form, by any of the means described on the back page, or drop in the collection basket in an envelope clearly marked SHAMROCK CONTEST. Entries must be received by November 1, 2007. Cash prize of \$50 will be awarded to the winner, who will be chosen by random drawing from all correct entries. You must be 18 or older to enter. Limit of one entry per person.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

ANSWER: _____

If you prefer to keep your newsletter intact, just send the answer and your name and address on a separate sheet of paper.

Upcoming Events....

Homecoming October 6, 2007
Fall Festival October 14, 2007
Catholic Schools Week ... Jan 27 - Feb 2, 2008
Pancake Breakfast.....February 3, 2008
Shamrock AuctionApril 19, 2008
Graduation.....June 1, 2008
Parish Festival June 20-22, 2008
Class of 58 50-Year Reunion..... Sept. 13, 2008

Next issue of The Shamrock—Mid April, 2008.
 Send in your news as soon as possible!

LOST SHEEP

Sometimes readers are surprised to find their own names or the names of their loved ones on the Lost Sheep list. Many times these people aren't lost at all, they have simply moved without letting us know. If we mail a newsletter and it comes back without forwarding information, we put that name onto the Lost Sheep list. To prevent this from happening, you can help us out by using the form on the back page to let us know when you move.



1953 Marilyn Smith Eliser
 1956 Duane Irrer
 1961 John D. Pung
 1965 Jack Luna
 1972 Ken Brown
 1974 Mark VanderHoff
 1975 Susan Thelen

1976 Chris Pung
 1979 Michael Hendricks
 1980 Angie Young
 1984 Tim Sheaffer
 1990 John Huhtula
 1991 Frank Wright

39th Annual Fall Festival & Smorgasbord SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2007

**Buffet Style Dinner
w/Area's Largest Salad Bar
Served in the cafeteria
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**



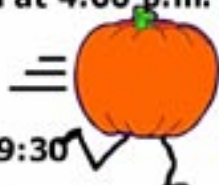
**Arts & Crafts Show
In the gym, hallways
and classrooms
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

**Kidfest Activities for the Kids
2nd Floor Hallway 11- 3:00
Win a Nintendo Wii!**



**Raffle! Raffle ! Raffle!
(\$2500 in cash prizes)
Parish Hall at 4:00 p.m.**

**5K Race
Alton Park
Registration 8 a.m., Race 9:30**



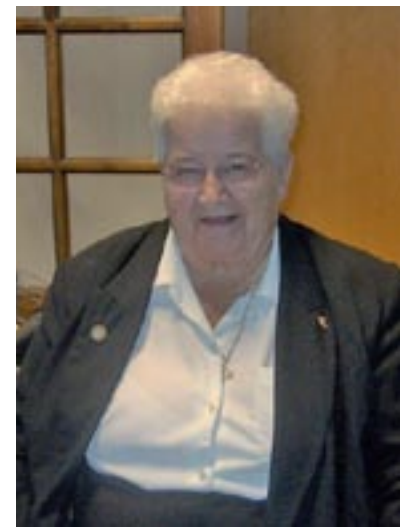
**For complete information on the
Fall Festival go to our website:
www.portlandstpat.com
and click on Fall Festival**

Sister de Porres

Four members of the Class of 1970 spent an enjoyable day visiting one of their old teachers, Sister dePorres, on September 22, 2007. Joan Milley, Diane Schlemmer, Sue Miller and Sue Van Lente traveled to Nazareth, Michigan for the visit and spent several hours listening to Sister's entertaining stories and recollections.

Sister dePorres, who taught at St. Pat's in the late 50's and again in the mid 60's, is 87-years old. Though she has had a quintuple bypass, several stints and a pacemaker, she remains very active, still working in the office at Nazareth every afternoon. Remarkably, she also still mows the lawn at the Nazareth cemetery on a John Deere riding mower.

Former students can drop her a note at 3427 Gull Road, Nazareth, MI 49074.





I asked Deacon Don Sobolewski to use my column to explain some important changes that are taking place in Catholic High School Theology Curriculum across the nation. These changes will assure that students who graduate from Catholic High Schools are as well-educated in Theology as they are in their other subjects.

Father Larry King

Last January (of 2007), a meeting was called by the Diocese of Grand Rapids to revise the curriculum for the Religious Studies Departments at the High School level. Fr. Larry and Sr. Maureen asked if I would go and represent St. Patrick School. The guidelines and course descriptions for the classes taught in High Schools around the country were changing. We were to put a plan in place to comply with the directives of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops regarding the content of Theology Classes at the High School level. This fall sees the first phase of implementation.

After the Diocesan meeting, with the concurrence of Sr. Maureen, Fr. Larry appointed me as "Liaison from the parish to St. Patrick School for Catechesis and Mission." (That's way too many words for a business card.) In practical terms this means that I'm the Religious Education Department Head for the entire school, both Elementary and High School. The chief catechetical and faith leader of any Catholic school is the Principal, and/or the Administrator, working with the Pastor. The Religion Department Head makes sure that the nuts and bolts are running smoothly.

So how does all of this impact St. Patrick School? First, the bishops of the United States have been concerned about the curriculum at the High School level for some time. They have set strict guidelines as to course descriptions and materials (the bishops now have a list of approved texts and only those may be used in the classrooms). They have also issued requirements for those teaching at the Secondary level. Teachers in High School must have the academic credentials to do so. This is true for English, Math, History, etc. It also must be true for Theology. Theology teachers in a

Catholic Secondary School should have a major (or at least a minor), in Sacred Theology or Pastoral Ministry or the equivalent.

Fr. Larry and Sr. Maureen have hired a new Theology Teacher, Mr. Brian Spitzley, to comply with this requirement. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Sacred Theology from St. Mary's College of Madonna University. I think our students will like him.

Because of how our courses were offered in the past few years, it will take two years to place our students on track with the Bishop's requirements. This year 6 out of the 8 semester course will match the Bishop's requirements. Next year (2008/2009), it will be 7 out of 8. The following year we will be on track. This means that Catholic High School Students around the country will be learning the same things and covering the same materials. This also means that standardized testing is soon to follow. We should soon be able to compare our students with students from the across the United States.

At the Elementary School level, each classroom teacher needs to begin the process of being certified as a Catechist. While all of our teachers are certified teachers in a secular subject, they have not studied Theology or Catechetics. The certification process will provide our elementary teachers some basic theology and catechetical principals. Teaching religion is not the same as teaching any other subject. Teaching religion is a matter of forming a child in faith and requires a few different skills than a classroom teacher can learn in a secular college. Our Elementary teachers are eager to learn more about their own faith so that they can confidently lead their students to Christ.

To help the teachers and the students, we have also changed the series of texts for the elementary grades K through 8. We will now use the Sadlier Series of "We Believe."

I will be on hand as resource and guide for the next year. We will work on Liturgy and Catechetics. I look forward to helping others come to know Christ so that they can bring others to Christ as well.

Deacon Don Sobolewski

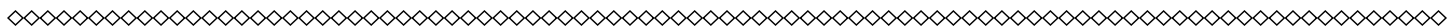
THANK YOU to the Estate of Norma Pung. Through Norma's generosity, St. Pat's gym has new sound proof doors and the school's intercom system has been upgraded. Norma was a student at St. Pat's in the 1930's, and her love and support of the school never diminished. She passed away last year, but had specifically stated in her will that part of her estate should be used to buy some things for the school that could not be covered by the regular budget. Thank you, Norma!



From the President's Desk *by Kevin Schrauben*

As of June 30, 2007, the Foundation has received nearly \$1,370,000 in contributions/donations since its inception. Earnings on the contributions are used to support Catholic education by providing tuition assistance to St. Patrick students.

Your continued support and donations are important in providing an excellent education for the students of St. Patrick. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to the Foundation. Such donations can be dropped off at the rectory, put in the offering at mass, or mailed to the Foundation at 140 Church Street, Portland MI 48875.



Father Flohe Foundation Announces Bell Award

The Father Flohe Foundation Board of Directors chose Rose Mary Simon as the recipient of the 2007 Education Bell Award. The award originated in 1992, and is given to an alumnus who has lived his/her life in such a way that he/she can be held as a model for our students. The award was given to the entire Simon family in memory of Rose Mary during commencement ceremonies in June.

Rose Mary graduated from St. Patrick School as co-valedictorian in 1965. Upon graduation from high school, she continued her education and graduated with high honors from the University of Detroit and subsequently went on to Wayne State University Law School where she earned her law degree. Rose Mary put her law degree to use in her work at Legal Aide of Lansing, an organization that provided low cost or free legal services to those who otherwise would not be able to afford such services. In 1975, Rose Mary suffered a stroke which left her with many disabilities. Regardless of any obstacles that may have been in her way, Rose Mary continued to help others. She was accepted into the Masters Program for Rehabilitation Counselors at MSU and went on to be a legal advocate

(Continued on page 13)

How To Support the Foundation

Cash Contributions • Life Income Gifts
Life Insurance • Memorial Gifts
Bequests • Securities & Real Estate

Contributions can be made by mail, in the Sunday offerings or by dropping by the Parish Office. Please be sure that your envelope is clearly marked Father Flohe Foundation.

If you have any questions or would like a supply of contribution envelopes, contact Kevin Schrauben (517) 647-1892.

Planned Giving Has Tax Advantages

Planned giving not only benefits the school, it also provides substantial tax benefits to the giver. For more information on any of these options or additional gift plans, contact your tax advisor, CPA, insurance agent or legal consultant.

for people with disabilities for the State of Michigan.

After 10 years in this capacity, Rose Mary passed away, but not without doing all she could to help those that may not have otherwise received the help they needed. Rose Mary dedicated her education and life to the service of others. This approach to helping others is an excellent example to the students of St. Patrick, as to what they can accomplish in life with dedication and hard work.



The family of Rosemary Simon accepts the Education Bell Award on her behalf. Back row: Marvin Simon, Mel Simon. Front Row: Martin Simon, Agnes Simon, Mark Simon, Kevin Schrauben. Missing from photo: Rita Simon.

Father Flohe Foundation Seeks Nominations For Education Bell Award

The Father Flohe Foundation is looking for nominations for the Education Bell Award that is given annually at the high school graduation ceremony in the spring. Nominees should be past students from St. Patrick (either eighth grade or high school graduates, can be living or deceased), who by their life and achievements exemplify the high goals that our alumni can attain.

Write a brief description about your nominee, including the year they graduated and submit to the Father Flohe Foundation, 140 Church Street, Portland MI. 48875 by November 1, 2007.

well-deserved break from the tedious work earlier in the week. That afternoon we returned to the Sisters. There was a large stump in the front yard that needed to be removed. The group was determined to get it out and the Sisters were very grateful to all. The Sisters took the kids into their own Chapel and showed them a first class relic that was involved in a miraculous healing of one of my friends, and gave them medals and holy cards.

Thursday, we finished working with the Sisters, and then helped clean out a community garden that is going to be used to grow vegetables for the community. The students were served a lunch from Chic-fill-a, which was donated...not just discounted...as the manager was going to give up her bonus to cover our expenses. Her willingness to sacrifice touched the heart of the store owner, so he generously gave us lunch for free! We were all living out our Holy Thursday call to serve. If we all served freely, what a much stronger community we would have!!

Friday, we cleaned up the retreat center we were staying at (also, through Fr. David Knight's generosity, we stayed without expense). The least we could do was help with yard and house maintenance and cleaning. Some of us went to St. Jude to learn about the work done at this world famous hospital. Did you know that no family ever pays a dime....not even a co-pay? There was a quote that stuck out in my mind..."Danny Thomas' reputation as entertainer is surpassed by his reputation as humanitarian." This is how it should be—we should be known not for what we did to succeed for ourselves in life, but rather, our legacy should be: What did we do for others?

Each day, a different group of students worked at a soup kitchen in downtown Memphis. One student said that it was interesting to see homeless people, because even though she knew the problem existed, it's not something we encounter on a regular basis. This trip was eye-opening in so many ways. The students were truly inspirational to me and to the other chaperones. Their desire to serve surpassed any desire to sleep or just lie around and be lazy! Their determination and sacrifice of their spring break will be forever etched in the hearts of people like Ms. Etta, and the generosity and loving spirit of people like the Missionary Sisters of Charity will be forever etched in ours.

Reunion News

REUNION REPORTS

Class of 1957 Celebrates 50!

On Saturday, September 8, 2007, the Father Flohe Foundation hosted the 50-year reunion of the *Class of 1957*. The reunion was held at the Parish Hall, starting with afternoon hors d'oeuvres and tours of the school, followed by the 4:30 Mass in their honor.



After Mass, there were group pictures, dinner, more tours and lot of "remember whens". It was a great evening enjoyed by all. Classmates attending the event were :Liana (Guidi) Cunningham, Mary Lou (Thompson) Goins, Donald Gross, Janet (Johnson) Hengesback, Robert Huhn, Patricia (Hilligan) Immonen, Joyce (Schrauben) LaFleur, William Manning, Beverly (Meitler) Platte, Donald Pline, Mary Lou (Martin) Pline, Larry Pung, Leon Pung, Joseph Russman, Thomas Simon, Barbara (Trierweiler) Sines, Joyce (Patrick) Strang and Janice (Willemin) Trierweiler.

The *Class of 1967* held their 40-year reunion on Saturday, September 1, at the V.F.W. Club in Portland. The evening began with a Mass at 4:30 for the three de-



ceased members of the class, Annie (Gross) Schrauben, Rosemary (Barker) Shinaver and Larry Meyers. Dinner and socializing followed at the V.F.W. Thirty people attended the reunion. Janice Fox traveled the farthest, coming from Olympia, Washington.

The *Class of 1997* held their 10-year reunion on May 5, 2007 at the Holiday Inn West in Lansing. Sixteen out of 30 classmates attended the event. Everyone enjoyed food drinks, and plenty of old stories. It was a fun evening of catching up with old friends.



REUNION ALERTS

The *Class of 1955* is having an off-year get together on October 25, 2007. Everyone is invited to a 1:00 p.m. Luncheon at the Wagon Wheel. Call Barb Densmore at (517) 647-6049 for more information.

The *Class of 1992* will hold their 15-year reunion on Saturday, October 20, 2007 at the Portland Country Club. The day will begin with a 4-man Scramble at 2:00, followed by a Texas Hold 'Em Tournament (\$10 buy in). Classmates are invited to come to the Banquet Room at the PCC anytime during the day for drinks and conversation. Food from Portland Party Store will be available.

The *Class of 2002* will hold their 5-year class reunion on Saturday, November 10, 2007 at the Wagon Wheel. For more information contact Ashley (Ingram) Kliever at (517) 526-1818.

St. Pat's School Faces Tough Times

(Continues from page 1)

dent supporter of keeping the school open. In a letter to The Shamrock in 1992, Fr. Malewitz recalled, "In August 1970 the Bishop called me into his office and told me that I was the new pastor at Portland St. Pat's. I remember thinking that I could never fill Monsignor Flohe's shoes. I arrived to find a group of parishioners who were fighting among themselves. Within ten days we all calmed down and began the hard work of keeping our school open."

Unfortunately, the Bishop had probably waited a little too long to send Father Malewitz to Portland, because the turmoil of the summer had taken its toll. Many parents decided that they could not wait to see what would happen at St. Pat's. Many others worried that the school would only stay open a year or two and end up closed. Undoubtedly, some others were discouraged by the increase in tuition. When the school opened that fall, the student body was much smaller than it had been the previous year.

But, it did open with veteran teacher and coach, Lou LaScala at the helm. More than half of the staff was already lay teachers and all of them returned. The other positions were quickly filled and on the first day of school in the fall of 1970, the students who returned breathed a sigh of relief that they were still Shamrocks!

If the school had coasted through those first sixty-four years, buoyed by a society who placed a high value on Catholic education, the next twenty years proved to be anything but smooth, and in fact became a wild roller coaster ride. Low teacher salaries led to high turnover. Many years the students returned in the fall to a school full of strangers. But, when the salaries were boosted to encourage teachers to stay, tuition had to be increased. And, increased tuition always meant that some families pulled their kids out of the school, leading to lower enrollment numbers.

But, higher salaries also led to better teachers. Parents saw more value for their tuition dollars, and within a few years enrollment would climb.

Administrators and school boards dedicated their time and efforts to making St. Patrick's the best it could be. Some were more successful than others.

One person who rose through the ranks at St. Pat's was Barb Tichvon. Barb taught sixth grade for six years, during a time of low morale and declining student numbers. During that time, the future of the high school was thought by many to be in jeopardy once again. Barb was promoted to the role of Assistant Principal in 1986, and she became one of the key people to bring stability back into the school.

In a letter to the Shamrock in 1995 Father Tom Boufford wrote, "Barb hired qualified teachers, initiated programs to improve the quality of education, developed a kindergarten program, listened and encouraged parental involvement in the educational process and worked with the priests to develop the Catholic faith in the students. As a result of her labors, parents and the parish community came to realize the value of Catholic education at St. Patrick's school and to see that the school would continue to serve the parish youth for a long time. Barb gave confidence to parents that they would not only see their own children graduate from the school, but their grandchildren as well."

By the spring of 1990, just four years after she had taken over, St. Pat's enrollment had climbed again to numbers not seen since the 1960's.

The 1990's will be remembered in Portland as the Decade of the Shamrocks. Higher enrollment meant larger athletic teams and an unprecedented record of success. St. Pat's sent an astonishing nine teams and one individual to the State Finals during the 1990's, bringing home six State Championship trophies!

As the decade came to an end, the parish recognized that St. Patrick School, which was virtually unchanged from Father Flohe's days, needed to be enlarged. A pledge drive was undertaken, within twelve weeks the money was raised, and on St. Patrick's Day of 2001 the groundbreaking ceremony took place.

St. Patrick School was ready for the 21st century!

FIRST SCHOOL BOARD ST. PATRICK SCHOOL

Elected Summer 1970

Gordon Seal, President

Dick Tichvon, V.P.

Mike Huhn, Secretary

Joe Fedewa, Treasurer

A. C. Barley

Gary Hodge

Do You Remember These?

In 1970, the girls at St. Pat's still wore dresses and skirts, and the boys still had pretty short hair. Things sure did change!

Mid 70's: Plaid Pants, Afros

Early 80's: Designer Jeans,
Feathered Hair

Mid 80's: Big Hair, Mulletts

Early 90's: Funky Pants &
Colorful Cardigans

Mid 90's: Colored Jeans,
Flannel Shirts, Shaved Heads

still do not have a handle on speaking Spanish. In addition, we are working in the campos, which is as far removed from suburban USA as possible. Families reside in one roomed thatch huts with dirt floors. They cook their meals in stone ovens outside. No one has a car, a phone or a way to get to the city.

This world is like the one that you see in the commercials about starving children. It's a world where dust flies everywhere, and it's normal to see worms in the toilet and lice on the children. It's a world where although there's food, there's no expectation to do more than have a child before the age of twenty and to stay in your pueblo of 20 people while your husband moves to Spain to try to earn a little money to support your kids.

But, here we are, stumbling through instructions, desperately trying to figure out the questions the children are asking and teaching lessons to students eager to learn. Here we are, helping the women to get an education, teaching them to read the bible a bit and cooking meals for them that are healthier than just rice. We've laughed, we've cried and we've gone a little crazy at times. We are well aware that the rest of our time here will be difficult and life changing, but are sure that it will also be the most intense, powerful and incredible year of our lives.

I miss everyone, and I really miss peanut butter and sugar! Keep me in your prayers!

*Corie Pung
Class of 2001*

EFFECTS OF SEASON CHANGES

By now everyone is surely aware that the MHSAA lost the Gender Equity lawsuit, which had been in the courts for the past several years. The decision, which takes effect this fall, requires all MHSAA affiliated schools (virtually every high school in the state) to change the seasons when some of the sports are played. The three Shamrock teams affected by the decision are Girls Basketball (which will switch from fall to winter), Volleyball (which will switch from winter to fall) and Boys Golf (which will switch from fall to spring). After much juggling of dates, officials, etc., Athletic Director Al Schrauben has schedules in place for most of the teams.

The switch that will affect us the most will be the one that requires Girls Basketball to play in the winter. Since this will double the number of basketball teams competing for practice and game times, our 2007-08 schedule might seem a bit erratic.

There are no hard and fast rules in the state for how the boys and girls teams are scheduled....except that they must be given equal opportunities to play at optimum times, so with that directive, the CMAC has decided to use the following schedule for basketball for the 2007-08 season, and will do an assessment at the end of the year to see where adjustments need to be made:

- *1st half of the season (Dec. 1-mid January):* Girls teams will play on Tuesdays and Thursdays, boys teams will play on Wednesdays and Fridays.
- *2nd half of the season (mid-January through February):* Boys teams will play on Tuesdays and Thursdays, girls teams will play on Wednesdays and Fridays.

This will definitely be a year of adjusting to a new way of life, and we ask that everyone please be patient and understanding as the state, the league, and our school strive to find schedules that works the best.

SHAMROCKS WELCOME NEW HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

The Shamrocks will begin the 2007-08 football season under the leadership of a new head coach. Pat Russman, longtime assistant was promoted to the top position when former coach, Chris Schrauben left St. Pats to take the head coaching job at Ionia High School.

Coach Russman is optimistic about the future of football at St. Pat's, though he admits that the school is definitely in a rebuilding phase right now. "We'll probably be pretty thin next year, because we're graduating around 20 seniors this year, but I am seeing enough of an interest from the kids coming up to know that we will be fine."

Don't Forget: www.portlandstpats.com

THE SHAMROCK

GUEST EDITORIAL

Tough Times Never Last, But Tough People Do!

In doing the research for this three-part series about the first 100 years at St. Pat's, I talked to dozens of people and heard dozens of stories and opinions. The thing that struck me the most, as I wrote this final article was the similarity between then and now. We tend to forget or are unaware of the struggles that previous generations faced, but in reality, history does repeat itself. Ideally, the lessons learned would be remembered, but usually they are not. It behooves all of us to not let the hard work of our predecessors be in vain, but to recognize and respect their accomplishments, and hope that some day, when someone writes the story of the second hundred years at St. Pat's, readers will also look with pride at the things our generation did!

As you read the story of St. Patrick School as it struggled through the 70's, 80's and 90's with challenges that often felt insurmountable, it's easy to draw parallels to the dilemmas that face the school again today. The roller coaster ride has not yet come to an end. But even though roller coasters can be frightening, they can also be exhilarating, and riders who stay aboard for the entire ride almost always walk away grinning from ear to ear.

The school continues to face tough forces. We live in a society where Catholics no longer feel obligated to send their children to Catholic schools. Indeed, many don't even feel obligated to take them to Sunday Mass. Tuition is high enough that it is a real sacrifice, though probably no more than it was for the families of years gone by, who had six or more children enrolled. A materialistic society provides many other things to spend money on—yearly trips to Disney World, the latest electronic gear, bigger homes, newer vehicles. Sadly, Catholic Education gets bumped to the back of the stove when families are faced with prioritizing their needs and wants.

And, in all honesty, because St. Patrick School is made up of human beings, it occasionally reflects the frailties and imperfections of mankind. There have been times when school boards and administrators have been slow to react to problems and standards allowed to slip. Bullies have been allowed to prey on weaker students, mediocre teachers have been kept on the payroll, and students have been allowed to push the dress code to near indecent levels with few consequences. Mistakes have been made and some of these mistakes have caused hard feelings. Rumors have run rampant, and the rumor-mongers have inflicted wounds that are painful to endure and slow to heal.

But in the tough times of the past the hard-working people of St. Pat's found ways to overcome their differences and pull together, and they are doing the same thing now. Even as Catholic schools across the nation have consolidated and closed, St. Patrick's School has hung in there, occasionally looking and feeling a little worse for the wear, but never giving in to defeat.

Students at St. Patrick have al-

ways performed at above average levels on standardized testing; graduation rates have always been near 100%; almost all graduates go on to college, and very few require remedial classes when they get there.

St. Patrick School will continue to provide Catholic Education, because despite the occasional tough times, there are still enough tough people out there, willing to fight the fight for excellence instead of mediocrity. There are still parents who believe from the depths of their hearts that their kids deserve a Catholic education and will be better people because of it. There are still parents who make the decision about where their kids will attend school—without putting it up to a vote or following the Pied Piper.

This school year's tougher academic and behavior standards and new uniform dress code have strengthened the foundation of the school. With that solid foundation laid down and a solid plan in place, it's time now to continue to build St. Patrick's into an institution which is worth the cost and the sacrifice.

—Sue Van Lente, Shamrock Editor

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**St. Patrick Church
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ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

...Please make the following change to the address file:

...Please add the following name to The Shamrock mailing list:

...Information on a Lost Sheep:

Name _____ Grad. Year _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

ATTENTION PARENTS: If your adult children have established permanent addresses, but their issues of The Shamrock are still coming to your house, please contact us with their new information. See contact information in the box on the left, or fill out this form and drop it in the collection basket in an envelope, clearly marked SHAMROCK NEWS-LETTER.

If you are planning a wedding or reunion, or have another reason for needing a list of your classmates, contact Jan at the Parish Office Building (517-647-6505) or stpats@cablespeed.com.