Remembering back to school days

How many of us remember our “Back to School” days? I vividly recall the annual trip with my saintly, devoted mother to the store to “pick out” my new school bag, binder, loose-leaf paper and other incidentals. It was a bitter-sweet ritual, denoting the sad end of summer vacation, but also the excitement of entering a new grade at school and being back with my classmates and friends. Well, now, as Yogi Berra once infamously said: “It’s like déjà vu all over again.”

A few months ago, the Loyola of Chicago School of Education Center for Catholic School Effectiveness sent me a copy of its publication, “National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools.” This helpful booklet lists four such standards and benchmarks: 1) mission and Catholic identity; 2) governance and leadership; 3) academic excellence; and 4) operational vitality. This document states: “Catholic schools, in collaboration with parents and guardians as the primary educators, seek to educate the whole child by providing an excellent education rooted in Gospel values. Catholic education is rooted in the conviction that Jesus Christ provides the most comprehensive and compelling example of the realization of full human potential.” These ideals and goals are always the heart and hallmark of the Catholic schools in our diocese.

This school year marks the first time that our diocese is participating in the Louisiana Scholarship Program to provide a quality education to students who have been enrolled in failing public schools. Only those Catholic schools that have openings for more students considered participating in this program.

The accommodation for enrollment of these students, accepted on a very limited basis only, can accomplish several objectives: 1) assist the Church in her mission to evangelize; 2) strengthen the outreach of our schools to help more students; 3) benefit the students and their families in obtaining a quality education, which will include sound moral teaching; and 4) assist the community in educating young people for both today and tomorrow. Throughout this school year we will be able to evaluate our experience with this program and hopefully our experiences will mirror the success that the Archdiocese of New Orleans has reported during its four years of having access to the state sponsored scholarship/voucher program.

I take this opportunity to praise, congratulate and thank all members of our Catholic schools’ family and community: students, parents, alumni, administrators at the diocesan and local level, teachers, staff, board, home and school association members, benefactors and volunteers. Through prayer, diligence and effort, let’s make the 2012-2013 school year our best ever! Best regards, grace, peace, blessings and prayers for you all.

From The Bishop
Bishop Robert W. Muench

Bishop Robert W. Muench has announced the names of the priests who will serve as chaplains in the eight high schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Ascension Catholic: Father Christopher J. Decker
Father Paul Yi

Catholic High School: Father Matthew C. Dupré
Brother Ray Hebert SC

Catholic High School of Pointe Coupée: Monsignor Robert H. Berggreen
Father Greg J. Daigle

Redemptorist Diocesan Regional High School: Father Marcel E. Okwara CSSR
Father Derrick J. Weingartner SJ

St. John Interparochial High School: Father Cleo J. Milano

St. Joseph’s Academy: Father Nicholas J. Nutter III

St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan High School:
Father C. Todd Lloyd
Father Gerard R. Martin

St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School:
Father John Boll OP
Father Randy M. Cuevas

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Join us for the 2012-13 school year
Celebrate a Happy New Year in Catholic schools

Happy New Year! is proclaimed each January as people reflect on the past and look forward to the future. While resolutions are noble, many of us are less than successful in accomplishing the intentions we make in January.

Schools are blessed to celebrate a new year each fall when students return from summer break, and schools make resolutions for improvement. Unlike the individual resolutions that so many people make and break in January, the resolutions for improvement made in Catholic schools are based on solid knowledge about teaching and learning along with the data received about student accomplishment from various sources. Such commitment to improvement is what makes Catholic schools consistently excellent, as they fulfill the vision of Evangelizing Hearts, Educating Minds and Embracing the Future.

Catholic identity continues to be strong in the Diocese of Baton Rouge Catholic schools. The Assessment of Catechesis and Religious Education (ACRE) indicates that students in the Diocese of Baton Rouge score above the national norm in all eight domains in all grades tested. Likewise, high schools worked together with the Catholic Schools Office and the Office of Evangelization and Catechesis to map the curriculum with the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops’ Framework for Religious Instruction. Service performed by students in Catholic schools is amazing, and many students reflect on the service component of their Catholic education as the most life-changing experience of their lives. The focus and intent is obvious: Catholic schools Evangelize Hearts.

Academic excellence can be seen in various ways, including classroom assessment, performance assessment and standardized testing. Terra Nova Testing results for elementary and middle school students in the diocese indicate exceptional performance and outstanding growth, particularly in the subject of mathematics. With programs such as First in Math for grades three through five, robotics for middle school students and solid science instruction in high school courses, the Diocese of Baton Rouge schools are taking steps toward excellence in preparing students for a technical world. The American College Testing (ACT) results over the past five years reflect a positive trend in the Diocese of Baton Rouge in increased college readiness in English, mathematics, reading and science. Likewise, the Diocese of Baton Rouge ACT results are above both national and state averages. Academic education is solid: Catholic schools Educate Minds.

Utilizing the Rigor, Relevance & Relationship Program within the National Accreditation Quality Assurance Guidelines, Catholic schools in the diocese continually strive for improvement. Teachers and administrators participate in professional development focused on the areas of need and the feedback from workshops and conferences, as well as the statistics from the online supervision program, indicate that educators welcome the opportunity for improving their work. Additionally, advisory board members on both the diocesan level and the local school level have increased their involvement in supporting schools with plans for financial stability. Collaborative planning is systemic: Catholic schools Embrace the Future.

As we say “goodbye” to the old year and say “hello” to the new school year, we are grateful for the leadership of Bishop Robert W. Muench, who supports and celebrates the work of our schools and to pastors and priests in our diocese, who nurture the ministry of education within their church parishes. With our reliance on the Holy Spirit, great things will continue in the ministry, giving us much to celebrate as we reflect on the past year and celebrate a Happy New Year in Catholic schools!
Four schools have new principals this year

By Laura Deavers
Editor

Four schools in the Diocese of Baton Rouge will have new principals this academic year. These four leaders have much in common while also being very different. Two are men. One woman has been in education for decades; one man has been in education for 10 years. One has lived in this area all of her life, one is coming back in education for 10 years. One has lived in Washington, they excided the highway at the Siegen Lane exit to put fuel in their car and get something to eat.

“We were so surprised to see this big sign for St. George Church and School and that the campus was so big and nice,” Jack Nelson commented, noting that where they lived in Washington this was uncommon.

For the past six years, Jack Nelson was principal at St. Michael School in Olympia, the state capital, where the enrollment was 270 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. He was also principal at All Saints Elementary School, a pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade school in Puyallup and Fife, Wash., with an enrollment of 400 on two separate campuses. Prior to that he taught sixth grade at two Catholic schools over a span of five years.

Jack Nelson has a master’s of education degree with an emphasis on educational leadership and principal certification from City University, Renton, Wash. His bachelor’s degree in communication studies, with a minor in biology, is from the Cheney, Wash., campus of Eastern Washington University.

When asked why he wanted to move his family across country to become principal of a Catholic school in Louisiana, Nelson said he wanted to take on the challenge of leading a really large school and was intrigued by the opportunity. He is also anticipating being in an area that is so very Catholic, coming from Washington, which he describes as “the most unchurched area in this country.”

“I am looking forward to being in a community that shares the same values and faith” that he and his family have.

The Nelsons have two more children: Conner, who graduated from high school this spring and plans to enter LSU next spring, and Emily, 12, who will be in seventh grade at St. George this year.

Nelson sees himself as a servant leader, “I am here to serve.” He plans to do this by having an open door for those who need to see him and by collaborating with the members of the administrative staff, faculty and parents.

“I don’t have all of the answers,” the principal stated matter-of-factly. He added that he thinks it would be silly of him to not use the resources he has access to, especially the people he will be working with.

Nelson said when he read the book, “Living Your Strengths,” he learned his five strengths are:

- Ideation: He looks at things or ideas that are unrelated and sees ways that they can be brought together.
- Developer: He sees the potential in people and helps them reach this potential.
- Relator: He gets along with people who have different communication styles.
- Connectedness: He connects the past with the present, celebrating tradition and how it leads to the future.
- Belief: He has a strong set of core values that help him make necessary decisions.

From the first interview with Nelson, which was conducted by Skype since the candidate for principal was in Washington, Father Michael Schatzle, St. George pastor, said he was impressed. The search committee brought Nelson to Baton Rouge for the second interview, “because

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The Catholic Commentator

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La
Paula Fabre

"I am so excited! I love it, I love it, I love it!" This is the way Paula K. Fabre describes her new position as principal of St. Francis Xavier School. This veteran educator has four decades of personal experience to bring to this new chapter in her life and to prepare her for the challenges and excitement that await her.

Two years ago, Fabre retired from the East Baton Rouge Parish School System after 38 years. She said for the first year she relaxed, “but I have so much energy that last year I began doing scholastic audits for the Arkansas Department of Education."

Over the years of her employment in the East Baton Rouge Parish School System, Fabre served as an assistant superintendent and supervised the instructional services of 26 elementary schools, directed equal educational opportunities while monitoring the agreement of the consent decree, coordinated human resources support programs, was an elementary school principal for nine years, an assistant principal for a year and taught for 13 years.

A product of Catholic education, Fabre talked about attending the now closed St. Augustine School in New Roads and being taught by the Sisters of Holy Cross, who she refers to as “exceptional educators.”

Fabre’s love of learning was instilled and nurtured by her parents, Cliff and Ruth Fabre. “My parents had the attitude of when you go to college, not if you go. They wanted their children to be well educated,” she said. “My parents would get school books for the next year so that we could have them over the summer. We were avid readers; we had books all the time and read all the time. We wanted to read; we wanted to make a difference and enjoyed learning.” Her parents also played classical music records in their home.

Fabre started her college years at the University of Southwest Louisiana, now University of Louisiana – Lafayette, studying to be a social worker.

She knew she was supposed to be a teacher because of the joy she found when she switched her major to education. She completed her studies at Southern University, receiving a BA and master’s degrees in elementary education. She also achieved her administration and supervision certification at Southern.

“I am a workaholic,” Fabre stated without apology. “God has blessed me tremendously.” And so, this women, whose son refers to as the busiest retired person he knows, wants to do all she can to educate children.

“Every child should be able to be what he or she wants to be, based on what we give them as an education,” Fabre explained. Children can select their future and they must be educated so that they can make that selection. “What we need to give them is a complete education.”

“Parents send us their best child,” Fabre stated, meaning that every child is the best that he/she can be. “We have to do our best for that child. There are no excuses.”

She believes children should be taught through modeling – teaching children what they need to know and how to live their lives by the way the adults behave. The Catholic Commentator
School news is always welcomed. Send to dshelley@diobr.org.

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PRINCIPALS

FROM PAGE 5B

in the children's life live.

On the first day of school, the
new St. Francis principal will
let all of the students know that
they have an A in every subject
with the message, “You have to
work to maintain it.”

Many parents and guard-
ians of public school children
in failing schools in East Bar-
ton Parish are applying to St. Francis Xavier
School to take advantage of
the state's scholarship program.
Fabre said she is looking forward
to all of the children who will be
attending her school. “There
will be no distinction between
the children” in the classroom,
among the students or the fac-
ulty. Fabre reassured.

She described her leadership
style as facilitative – getting
ideas from others about the best
way to approach and solve a situ-
ation. “I still have to do the job,
I am still responsible for what
happens. But it is not a sense of
you have to do this. It is all about
how we live life and treat others
every day.”

A member of St. Francis Xavi-
er Church, Fabre believes the lo-
cation of her church and school
are valuable to the community
and she is looking forward to
being involved in the community.

She also anticipates the learn-
ing opportunities that will be
available this year, including
putting in a community garden
for the students. She will intro-
duce the students to learning
from a first person point of view.

“The students tell stories about
what they have learned in the
first person, which makes a big
difference for the children.”

Other plans include pairing
 teachers in third and fourth
grade, in fifth and sixth grade
and in seventh and eighth grade.
One teacher will teach language
arts and social studies, and the
other teacher will provide math
and science lessons. The princi-
pal explained that the teachers
will save time because they do
not have to prepare for as many
subjects. The students will ben-
et because the teachers will be
couraged to move students
ahead if they are ready and to
provide more remedial lessons
for the students who are having
difficulty.

“All of the boys and girls have
an equal opportunity to excel,”
Fabre stated. “They have to learn
math and science to compete in
today's changing job market
and the global community. The world
is so different.”

With her attitude that the
biggest room is the room for
improvement, Fabre will be able
to help her students adapt to that
changing world.

“Our Catholic values will be
taught in the classrooms. We
openly profess our faith while we
are teaching. St. Francis Xavier
School is blessed with a Catholic
outlook,” said Fabre, whose
double first cousin is New Orleans
Auxiliary Bishop Sheldon Fabre,
who was a priest in the Diocese
of Baton Rouge for many years.

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Andereck

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Andereck
will be principal of Redem-
torist High School this year.
A product of Catholic education,
she attended 12 years of Catholic
elementary and high school and
has been a Catholic school prin-
cipal for 18 years.

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builds community, and deepens spirituality in a Catholic environment.

Redemptorist High School pursues academic excellence, inspires lifelong learning,
builds community, and deepens spirituality in a Catholic environment.

THOUGH she grew up in
Memphis and has lived in
Mississippi for 12
years, Andereck is
no stranger
to Baton Rouge.

She received a
BS in elementary education in
1976 from LSU and taught at
Holy Family School for a year
and a half in 1977. One of her
sons is a graduate of LSU and
lives in the city while her young-
er son will be a freshman at LSU
this fall.

“My educational career has been focused on
Catholic schools, starting at Holy Fam-
ily School upon graduation from
college, and then to Memphis as
principal for 10 years,” said An-
dereck of her interest in being
principal in the Diocese of Ba-
ton Rouge. “In Memphis, I was
the principal of the elementary
school at the Cathedral of the
Immaculate Conception and
was successful in opening a year-
round preschool and develop-
ing a partnership with Fed Ex
for our junior high.”

While principal at Immacu-
late Conception, she was able
to operate the school without a
subsidy from the church parish,
increase enrollment and keep
tuition affordable, she reported.

Andereck received her mas-
ter's degree from Indiana Uni-
versity, Bloomington, Ind., in
international and comparative
education with a specialization
in Latin American education.
She earned a doctoral degree
in educational curriculum and
instruction from Texas A&M
University, with a focus on eth-
ic and minority groups and
has done post-doctoral work in
educational administration
and supervision at the University of
Memphis.

Andereck is coming to Baton
Rouge from Hattiesburg, where
she has been employed at the
University of Southern Missis-
sippi, William Carey University
and Sacred Heart School, where
she was principal. This past year
she has been a visiting assistant
professor at USM in the depart-
ment of educational leadership
and school counseling, coordi-
nator of the master's program
and supervisor of the on-line
and hybrid administrative
internship practicums. She was an
assistant professor at William
Carey University in the college of
education.

Being at USM and WCC ‘has

See PRINCIPALS PAGE 7B
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(back to top)
“In Imitation of Christ” is the theme for Our Lady of Mercy’s upcoming academic year. The idea of the students imitating Christ renews the school’s commitment to service awareness and opportunities for expressing their Catholic identity in the community.

OLOM students will learn how to live “In Imitation of Christ” by studying about people who have lived exceptional lives of holiness, said Brian Moscona, Our Lady of Mercy principal. “The life of a different saint will be studied each month, which will reinforce the ideals of living a life centered on Gospel values.”

St. Rose of Lima, St. Jerome, St. Jude, St. Cecilia, St. Francis Xavier, St. John Bosco, St. Agatha, St. Katherine Drexel, St. John the Baptist and St. Rita will be the 10 examples of holiness that the students will study this year. Along with the lives of these saints, students will examine the virtues of joy, wisdom, hope, faith, humility, understanding, modesty, justice, fortitude and charity.

“Faith, academics and character formation are fundamental elements upon which the Our Lady of Mercy School student experience is developed, and implementation of programs addressing those elements assures continued growth in these areas,” said Moscona.

Each school year, all OLOM students have the opportunity to be involved in charitable works at their school and church parish.

Last school year, students collected non-perishable food items for the Christmas food baskets that Our Lady of Mercy Church put together; money and medicine for the “Fill a Prescription for the Needy” program sponsored by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul; and money for the Rice Bowl program sponsored by Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

Mary’s Club, which is for girls in second- through fourth-grade, participated in projects that involved work with the Louisiana School for the Deaf, Parker House and the tornado victims of Holy Spirit School in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Fourth-grade students visited St. Clare Manor Nursing Home regularly throughout the year to share creative activities and special moments.

Our Lady of Mercy School sixth-grade students from left, Lizzie Bowie, Cadon Ardoin, Isabella Canova and Nicholas Major, front, sort some of the over 3,300 non-perishable items donated for the Christmas food baskets Our Lady of Mercy Church put together. Photos provided by Mari Buzbee | Our Lady of Mercy School
Our Lady of Mercy School Mary’s Club members, from left, Emily DeSoto, Sydney DeSoto, Lily Guidry and Kate Uffman display Christmas stockings they filled for Parker House.

FROM PAGE 8B

Fifth- and sixth-graders visited the Adoration Chapel at Our Lady of Mercy Church and incorporated reflective prayer into their service missions.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students were introduced to the program “Who Do You Say That I Am?” This service program prepares students for the sacrament of confirmation, which they will receive in high school, and instills in them an awareness of recognizing Jesus in everyone — the poor, homeless, elderly and imprisoned. These students participated in service days and spent time doing work for Catholic Charities, St. Vincent DePaul, St. Clare Manor and Our Lady of the Lake Children’s Hospital.

“As Catholic educators we are in the soul saving business,” Moscona said. “Activities planned for the upcoming school year support that philosophy. They are organized to provide opportunities that engage students in new experiences while creating an awareness of other’s needs. Opportunities continually develop, and by model, nurture the compassionate spirits of generations to follow.”
Local high schools are seeing a growing popularity in the so-called “minor” sports. Golf, bowling, lacrosse, swimming, tennis, soccer, cross country and even power lifting are coming into their own. For instance, Rosalie Landry, a student at Ascension Catholic Regional High School, was named overall state champion in women’s power lifting. Cameron Andry of St. Michael the Archangel recently won the Boy’s 16s Singles Division tennis title.

“Just because it may not get as much press as some sports, every sport – whether it is tennis, cross country or golf – is important.”

Pete Boudreaux
Catholic High School track and cross country coach

“We’re seeing more new athletic programs coming into our schools,” said Pete Boudreaux, track and cross country coach at Catholic High School. “For so many students, these sports are their passion. We don’t call them minor sports here at Catholic High,” he added. Boudreaux sees it as the job of the schools to give students every opportunity to excel and enjoy their sport. Just because it may not get as much press as some sports, every sport – whether it is tennis, cross country or golf – is important.”

Ascension Catholic Athletic Director and Football Coach Doug Moreau said just about every student in his school is able to participate in athletics because of the wide diversity of sports offered. He said athletics can teach students valuable lessons that they carry into life. Dedication, commitment and overcoming adversity are some of the values an athlete learns, whether he or she participates in a team sport or an individual sport. “The more kids we have involved in sports, the better it is for them, the school and everybody concerned,” Moreau said.
Sacred Heart of Jesus School is launching a new interdisciplinary academic program this school year that will utilize religion, art and music to educate the students on the history, art and architecture of Sacred Heart of Jesus Church in Baton Rouge.

Everyone who enters Sacred Heart Church notices the large painting of Jesus in the ceiling above the altar in the sanctuary because of the size and prominence of the painting.

Every Wednesday during the academic year, the Sacred Heart School family gathers in their church for prayer. As this spiritual practice continues this school year students will know that the mural on the ceiling, which is “Christ in Triumph,” measures 36 feet from the tip of one of Jesus’s hands to the fingertip of the other. They will also know that the translation of the Latin phrase below the mural is, “You are our victorious King, Heart of Jesus, have mercy.”

Students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade will be led on guided age-appropriate tours of the interior and exterior of the 70-year old church, learning about the architects and artists who created this place of worship. They will learn the history of the church and the symbolism incorporated into the physical design of the building. The murals, stained glass, paintings and sculptures that adorn the church will be examined and studied.

Each student will receive a coloring book featuring many aspects of the church that has been created with original pen and ink drawings by Sacred Heart parishioner and archivist Mary Lee Eggart. The drawings were originally used in the 1970s and 1980s as covers for the weekly Sacred Heart Church bulletins. Eggart is also the author of “A Guide to the Art and Architecture of Sacred Heart of Jesus Catholic Church.”

Sacred Heart School religion coordinator Marylyn Dietz is spearheading the interdisciplinary project. “Sacred Heart of Jesus Church Parish is blessed with a church rich in history and physical beauty,” said Dietz. “It’s important that we share this with our students.”

Eggart agreed with Dietz, and noted, “The early (Sacred Heart) parishioners left our parish a campus filled with exceptional art and architecture. Sharing this with our students teaches them important history and art lessons, and, more importantly, it keeps the memory of the early parishioners alive. Their spirit, dedication and generosity are the ultimate example of true commitment to a parish family.”

Art teacher Dorothy Calandro will work with students at all grade levels to create reproductions of the art found in the church, including stained glass replicas, Play-Doh sculptures and mosaic murals. Older students will be able to photograph their favorite church artwork.

As students study the physical church, they will examine how the people of God reflect faith as a community. Music teacher Melissa Seidule will lead the students as they participate in prayer through songs that reflect that theme. Students will sing these songs at morning assembly during the week of church tours, and the songs will be used throughout the school year at the weekly school liturgies.

Religion teachers will lead students in discussions on what they have learned about the church. Some classes will write essays about the church, while others will work on prayers inspired by the artwork.

“Mary’s (Eggart) book points out that ‘the Church knew that the beauty of art lifts the heart and mind toward God and things of the spirit,’” said Dietz. “It is our hope that this program will inspire the school community as they praise and worship together at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church.”

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iPads replace text books at St. Thomas Aquinas High School

By Barbara Chenevert
Staff Writer

St. Thomas Aquinas High School junior Madison Chauvin is looking forward to the opening of school because this year she won’t have to carry a book bag of heavy textbooks.

St. Thomas will be using the 1:1 iPad program (pronounced one-to-one) where each of the 380 students and all the teachers will have individual iPads.

“It’s a different way of thinking about teaching,” said technology director Josh Wittie. The iPads will also allow teachers to be more creative in their assignments and students to be more creative in their lessons, he said.

The individual iPads are made available through a $350 per year technology fee paid by the students. The iPads are leased from Apple Inc. for three years with an option to buy.

Teachers can walk around their classroom with the iPads in hand and send the lesson to the projector, he said. At the same time, a student can be called on to display his/her work on the projector also using the student’s iPad.

“When you put the same device with the same hardware in everybody’s hands, it allows for more creative imaging and more media rich content,” Wittie said.

“I am excited about the program because of the variety of effects it will have on everyone at STA,” Chauvin said. “Academically, the iPads will allow for greater interaction between the faculty and students. Everyone has been researching new and exciting applications for us to utilize in each subject that will enhance our learning environment.”

“An added bonus is not having to carry heavy, cumbersome textbooks! Everything will conveniently be in one place,” she added.

Teachers were required to attend an orientation program on the use of the iPad in mid June, and every student will have to attend a learning session before the school year begins in early August.

The students will be taught how to use the iPad as well as acceptable use of the computer. Students will not be able to access Facebook or other social networking systems while at school because the school’s own firewall will block them, Wittie said. When they get home, it will be the parent’s responsibility to oversee the use of the iPad, Wittie said.

Students cannot add apps or download music without permission of the school, he added. Chauvin said she also believes the iPad program will help teach students personal responsibility.

Wittie said after researching computer options, he found the iPad was less expensive and required less maintenance than some laptops.

St. Thomas is still contractually bound to purchase textbooks, but for the most part, publishers have their textbooks iPad ready so they can be downloaded. Those that do not, they have allowed the content to be scanned in PDF format and placed on the iPad.

Welcome back!

The Diocese of Baton Rouge Child Nutrition Program (CNP) provides students with affordable, nutritious, freshly cooked, and good tasting meals. Students are served meals in accordance with the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Nutrient Standard Menu Planning protocol, which requires analysis of all meals to meet the dietary and nutritional guidelines established for each age/grade group. We continue to educate our students on making healthy choices by packing the serving line with nutrient-rich foods that are ready to eat: colorful fruits and cut-up fresh vegetables; low-fat plain and flavored milk, cheese and yogurt; and whole-grain snacks. The Child Nutrition Program continually strives for improvement and growth in service to the families in the Diocese of Baton Rouge.

We will work in partnership this year with the USDA and state agencies, following the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 in implementing the new standards for school meals that will result in healthier meals for students. The new meal requirements will raise standards for the first time in more than fifteen years and improve the health and nutrition of nearly 32 million students across the nation every school day.

The Child Nutrition Program has already implemented many of these changes over the past several years by actions such as offering salads and more fresh fruits and vegetables. The new standards make the same kinds of practical changes that many parents are already encouraging at home, including:

• Ensuring students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;

• Substantially increasing offerings of whole grain-rich foods;

• Offering only fat-free or low-fat milk varieties;

• Limiting calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size;

• Increasing the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat and sodium.

Working to help reduce childhood obesity, the CNP is committed to the promotion of healthy eating and active lifestyles in ensuring that students have access to safe, nutritious, and balanced meals.

Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on chart above. Free and reduced lunch applications are available from each school or you may apply online at: www.cnpbr.org under the “forms” or “meal information” links.

Thank you for your continued support of the Child Nutrition Program. We look forward to a wonderful 2012-13 school year in service to families in the Diocese of Baton Rouge!

Sincerely,
Ms. Lynda Carville
Child Nutrition Supervisor
New year brings exciting changes to St. Joseph’s Academy

St. Joseph’s Academy begins the 2012-2013 academic year with two new additions.

Jan Rhorer Breen has been named president of the Academy following Sister Adele Lambert’s retirement in June. Breen, a 1969 graduate of SJA, is the first lay president in the school’s 144-year history. The new school year will see the opening of the Academy Arts Center. This addition to the SJA campus features a 50 x 50 x 32-foot black box theater with back-of-house spaces and control booth; a 44 x 40-foot dance studio with sprung wood floor and support areas, including changing rooms and closets; a 44 x 40-foot chorus room along with a music library and practice rooms; two fine arts classrooms; and an art room complete with sinks, kilns, cabinetry and display surface.

The opening of the Academy Arts Center is the culmination of a $6 million capital campaign. The Always the Academy capital campaign was launched in 2008 to address the facilities and curriculum needs first identified as part of SJA’s 2003 Master Plan.

“In addition to the Academy’s investment in technology to support academics, our 2003 Master Plan revealed the need for greater balance between the three pillars of our mission statement: faith development, academic excellence and personal growth,” said SJA principal Linda Fryoux Harvison. “It is our commitment to honor the balance between academics and the arts. We have created an exciting visual and performing arts curriculum as a complement to our strong academic and religious curricula. The arts center will benefit the young women of the Academy by providing wonderful space for their artistic expression and a holistic education.” Post Architects designed and contractor Cangelosi Ward built the facility with an eye to the past. The building’s exterior has a traditional appearance in keeping with the style and materials used on other campus buildings, including a two-story scale, blonde brick, stucco, repeating arches and columns.

Among the special features of the center is its placement on campus to allow for a hub of circulation in the floor plan. A rotunda space of double-height volume with a balcony provides an expansive view of the orchard on the school’s campus. Among the special features of the center is its placement on campus to allow for a hub of circulation in the floor plan. A rotunda space of double-height volume with a balcony provides an expansive view of the orchard on the school’s campus.

While Grace Duhe graduated in May and will not enjoy the new building as a student, she said she awaits its grand opening.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

The schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at its schools. They do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school administered programs. Additionally, in compliance with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, no person in the schools of the Diocese shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity except as permitted under said Title IX.

Finally, the schools of the Diocese of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, have adopted and will implement the imperatives of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act as amended, and will inform parents and students of their rights under this amendment to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The above stated policy applies to the following schools and institutions of the Diocese:

Ascension Diocesan Regional School
Catholic High School (Baton Rouge)
Catholic Elementary of Pointe Coupee
Catholic High of Pointe Coupee
Holy Family School
Holy Ghost School
Mater Dolorosa School
Most Blessed Sacrament School
Our Lady of Mercy School
Redemptorist Elementary School
Redemptorist Diocesan Regional High School
Sacred Heart of Jesus School
Special Education Program
St. Alphonsus School
St. John Primary & St. Theresa Middle School - EAI/EL Partnership

St. Elizabeth Interparochial School
St. Francis Xavier School
St. George School
St. Jean Vianney School
St. John Elementary School
St. John High School
St. Joseph School
St. Joseph’s Academy
St. Jude the Apostle School
St. Louis King of France School
St. Michael the Archangel Diocesan Regional High School
St. Peter Chanel Interparochial School
St. Thomas Aquinas Diocesan Regional High School
St. Thomas More School

Admits qualified students regardless of race, color, sex, or national origin.
Holy Family students interested in improving environment

Students at Holy Family School are letting their teachers know they are serious about taking care of the environment and doing what they can to use and recycle what they have.

Over the past two years, students have organized the R-3 club, which stands for reduce, reuse and recycle. In their effort to help save their environment, the 20 club members recycle items collected weekly – cans from the teachers’ lounge, and milk bottles, plastic bags and drink pouches from the cafeteria.

The industrious young people also redeem for cash the pop-tops from aluminum cans. They use the money they make from the pop-tops to purchase books for the school library.

Another component of R-3 is education. The middle school students, who are members of R-3, teach the lower level students about the importance of the environment and saving the earth through various programs throughout the year.

“The students had the idea for the club and came to us,” said Brenda Fremin, Holy Family School principal as she told about the students approaching their teachers and the school’s leaders about forming this club. “They were so excited about it and have continued with their enthusiasm.”

Two Holy Family students, Silver Effler and Abby Hemba, took what they knew about protecting the environment a step farther in their State Science Fair Project. With a focus on chemistry, the students’ project, “Rub-a-Dub-Dub,” demonstrated the proper method for removing oil from duck feathers and the type of soap that is the most effective.

Holy Family students became gardeners this past school year. With the help of parents, school staff and volunteers a school garden was constructed in January.

Before the garden was assembled, Miles Brashier, LSU AgCenter agent for the three civil parishes of West Baton Rouge, Iberville and Pointe Coupée, provided advice on how to plan the garden and when plants should be planted.

Fourth graders and their teachers Gayle Henderson and Lisa Holcombe are responsible for the garden which is located at the school.

The students planted vegetables, fruits and herbs in the spring for their first harvest.

The HPS Home and School Association is completing the first phase of the garden and plans to make further improvements to the campus by constructing rain barrels to collect water for the garden, planting fruit trees, acquiring more garden tools and supplies for the students and building benches around the campus so the students and faculty can enjoy the improved landscape.

St. Joseph Catholic School
Proud of Our Alumni

FROM PAGE 14B
opening with excitement. “I think the new arts building is a fantastic addition to the school,” she said. “I have a passion for art, and I’m happy to see that it will continue to be taught in a welcoming environment.”

Freshman Ada Bankston eagerly anticipates the center’s amenities. “I take ballet, and I’m looking forward to having larger rooms for both changing into costumes and for dancing,” she said.

Ashleigh Dowden is SJA’s drama instructor, theatrical production director and moderator of the SJA/Catholic High School Drama Club. “When I imagine what a new theater space would do for my students, I feel overwhelmed with joy,” Dowden said.

“This space will say, ‘We value the arts and believe in providing the best learning environment for our performing arts students!’ The possibilities that will suddenly open for my students and for me are countless.”

Kris Cangelosi is SJA’s dance faculty and director of The Cangelosi Dance Project. “The new SJA art building will support the arts by providing dedicated space on campus to develop, mentor and provide life education for the students enrolled in the arts,” she said. “The professional performing art teachers or working artists in residence already provide knowledge and course development to the students. The new building will supply the operational existence needed for classes and performances to enhance students’ opportunities. When students and visitors come to the art building, they will feel like they walked into the movie Fame.”

St. Joseph Catholic School
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Faculty and institutional leaders from Our Lady of the Lake College participated in a symposium sponsored by the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities (AFCU) held at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wis. in June. The conference focused on ways Catholic institutions of higher education are called to serve their communities, how campus members can learn more about the needs of the community and how to prepare to lead for the sake of the common good.

“I think the AFCU symposium was especially valuable for the ways it showed me that we are part of a community with shared values, purposes, challenges,” explained Dr. Glenn Blalock, OLOL College’s associate vice president for academic and student affairs.

Servant leadership was a major sub-theme explored during the symposium. This type of management style espouses leading others, not in an authoritative manner, but by building up and serving every individual on the team. While this management philosophy is non-denominational, it has strong parallels within the Franciscan tradition and opens promising possibilities for effective learning and leadership styles in higher education.

OLOL College institutional leaders Dr. Rhoda Reddix, coordinator of service-learning, and Dr. Phyllis Simpson, dean of student services, chaired a round-table discussion called “Empowering Students to be Servant Leaders through Service-Learning and Civic Engagement Collegiate Experiences.”

Simpson said, “We were able to share examples of the transformative effects of emphasizing the attributes of servant leaders in all of our community outreach projects. And we were able to give concrete examples of some of our recent graduates who are now gainfully employed because of the service experiences they could list on their resumes.”

Everyone from OLOL College who attended the symposium was invited to give a presentation or participate on a panel. Others from OLOL College participating in the symposium were Sister Martha Ann Abshire FMOL, campus minister; Keeley Dupuy, professor of nursing; Dr. Sandra S. Harper, OLOL College president; Dr. Katherine Krieg, dean, School of Arts, Sciences and Health Professions; and Dr. David L. Whidden, professor of religion.

This was the largest contingent ever to attend an AFCU conference from OLOL College, and the institution and its students will able to benefit from the concepts about leadership and mission brought back from the weeklong event.

“The AFCU symposium was a wonderful experience,” stated Sister Martha Ann. “To have the opportunity to meet and speak with other staff and faculty members of fellow Franciscan institutions was an incredible privilege. It was enlightening to hear new ideas and at the same time an affirming experience to know that here at the college we are also doing great things that others found helpful.”

Our Lady of the Lake College is a four-year institution, providing a strong foundation in the liberal arts, health sciences and nursing programs.
STM campus has new, remodeled buildings

When St. Thomas More students return to school Aug. 8, they will have a new “front door” to their campus along with facelifts, renovations and additions to many of their familiar classroom buildings.

The new entrance to the campus has been created with the completion in June of a building that houses the administrative offices and a new technology/library media center. The technology/library media center houses over 8,000 books and 54 computers. With the integration of technology within the curriculum, the additional computer lab in the technology center allows classes to work on math programs, participate in science webcasts and study geography.

The main classroom building, where the administrative offices were located for many years, has been renovated so that all of the second-, third- and fourth-grade classes, and a computer lab are now in that two-story building.

Major renovations are being made to the fifth- and sixth-grade building. A new commons area, similar to the one in the junior high building, is being built so the classrooms open to the inside rather than the outside for security purposes. This building will also contain student services, such as rooms for resources, guidance counseling, a nurse, and a speech and occupational therapy room.

A new science lab is being built for the junior high, so this year there will be two science labs on the STM campus.

A new band and music room is being added in the building that houses the school’s gymnasium.

Covered walkways connect the new administration building with the other buildings on the campus.

St. Thomas More School has over 800 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. For the past 50 years, the school has remained true to its mission to provide a leg- acy of excellence in religious and academic education. STM students have consistently placed in the top percentile on high school entrance exams, received numerous aca- demic performance and individual student awards, and have a reputation of excelling in extracurricular activities.

“We are proud of our accomplishments and we wanted to give the students, not only the greatest curriculum, but a modernized environment with new facilities for them to succeed now and many years into the future,” said Judy Armstrong, principal of St. Thomas More. She added that portions of the buildings and facilities on the STM campus have remained unchanged since the school opened its doors in 1960.

“We are excited to start the new school year off with new and renovated facilities,” stated Armstrong.

SLKF students beautifying school grounds

For 30 years, St. Louis King of France School has provided a quality Catho- lic education to children in its area and now teaches children from 3 years of age through eighth grade.

Each year, St. Louis King of France School chooses a theme, which provides a springboard for activities throughout the year and is integrated into all areas of school life.

Last year, the theme was “Growing in Service, Love, Knowledge and Faith.” The school’s music teacher, Gerald Duet, wrote a song, “We Are Growing,” so students could better relate to the theme. The song was sung at the end of every school Mass.

Each class was assigned an area of the school to beautify. Classes chose planters and flowers to enhance the school grounds and students were responsible for the upkeep of the gardens.

The middle school students participated in the “Coastal Roots” Program. They grew trees and then planted them in a specified area to help prevent coastal erosion.

Interest in the flower gardens was so great that the suggestion was made to add a community garden. School personnel have been attending sessions and making plans to start a vegetable garden next year.

Our children also grew in skills. We were first in the state and fourth in the nation in First in Math, a computer based math challenge program.

St. Louis will continue to grow in all ar- eas. “We are preparing for next year when our theme will be “Peace, Love & St. Lou- is,” said SLKF principal Mary Clare Polito.
By Laura Deavers
Editor

When St. Thomas Aquinas High School opened its doors Sept. 2, 1986, a decades-long dream came true for the Catholics in Tangipahoa Civil Parish — there was a Catholic high school for their children in Hammond.

Bishop Stanley J. Ott, who was bishop of Baton Rouge at that time, dedicated the new high school March 6, 1987.

Catholic elementary schools had provided younger students with a faith-based education as early as 1912 when Holy Ghost School opened in Hammond. When students completed their eighth-grade studies at Holy Ghost or St. Joseph in Ponchatoula or Mater Dolorosa in Independence, there was no local Catholic high school for them to attend.

In the 1950s, 20 acres of land north of Hammond was donated with the expressed purpose that it would be used as the location for a Catholic high school. Interest in the high school was sweetened in 1970s when the money paid for the Cardinal Newman Hall, a student dormitory at Southeastern Louisiana University owned by the Diocese of Baton Rouge, was set aside for a Catholic high school in Tangipahoa Civil Parish.

In 1984, after a year and a half of negotiations, the Diocese of Baton Rouge gave approval to begin a $3.4 million campaign to raise the money needed to build the high school. Bishop Ott started the campaign with his pledge of $350,000. Within six weeks of the capital campaign kickoff almost $700,000 had been raised.

Catholic education supporters in Tangipahoa were surprised the Diocese of Baton Rouge gave approval to build the high school since St. Michael the Archangel High School (formerly Bishop Sullivan Regional Catholic High School) had opened in the fall of 1984. Plus, the economy was down following a recession, oil prices were falling, farmers were suffering because of a recent drought and, since, at that time, Tangipahoa was more rural, personal income was not as high as in Baton Rouge.

Bishop Ott and Catholic School Superintendent Sister Mary Michaeline Green OP, pledged their continued support and commitment to building a Catholic secondary school in Tangipahoa that would be called St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Catholic High School.

Five months into the campaign, the first-phase goal to raise $2 million was achieved and surpassed by $300,000, which allowed for construction to begin on the high school in October 1985.

Francis Mercante, one of the original members of the committee to raise money for the new school, credits the success of the campaign to Bishop Ott who “was willing to take the leap of faith and so he gave the project his ‘breath of life.’”

Mercante said the people wanted the school so badly that they were willing “to fight for it, to make sacrifices for it and to continue to support it.”

“The people who touched me more than anything were the ones who believed, the ones who worked relentlessly, who paid their pledges month after month, no matter how big or small in order to see this dream come true – not only for our children, but for future generations of Catholics in our region,” said Mercante.

As construction on the school began, the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, Ill., agreed to staff the school for at least six years. They stayed for nine, until 2005. Sister Mary Roselle OP, St. Thomas Aquinas’ first principal, was joined by Sister Patricia Burke, who taught math, science and religion, and Sister Mary Antonette OP, who taught English and religion and was also the school’s guidance counselor. Six lay teachers – three men and three women – completed the staff.

The first class of students in 1986 had 37 freshmen. A grade was added each year. When the first students graduated in 1990, there were 28 seniors.

Several former students have been members of the St. Thomas Aquinas faculty and staff. Courtney Day Sliewica, 1998, world geography; Will John, 1995, speech and drama; Josh Wittie, 2000, technology director; and Megan Candiotto, 2005, and Ashley Arnone Brady, 1997, have been school counselors.

Now, as St. Thomas Aquinas High School continues to provide a Catholic education to the high school students in and around Tangipahoa Civil Parish, plans are underway to expand and improve the buildings, parking lots and athletic facilities and fields on the current campus.

Contributing to this story were members of the staff of The Catholic Commentator, the new student newspaper at St. Thomas Aquinas: Macy Rivet and Madison Chauvin.
St. Michael High School guides students through faith, truth, service

St. Michael the Archangel High School uses its three charisms — fides/faith, veritas/truth and ministerium/service — to guide its students. Each quality expresses part of St. Michael’s mission and purpose as a Catholic school.

“Just as faith without works is dead, so too, will faith and truth always be incomplete if they do not enable and motivate us to minister to others, to serve the poor and bring joy and love to the lonely,” said Peter Fletcher, assistant principal of spirituality. “We celebrate fides, veritas and ministerium at St. Michael High School by facilitating a year-round service program for our students, encouraging them to give back and celebrate all they have for which to be thankful.”

Each St. Michael student is required to volunteer to serve others through community service. Through individual commitment, clubs, and sports programs and teams, students volunteer over 20,000 hours in this community each year.

Freshmen are required to complete at least 10 hours, sophomores must serve a minimum of 15, juniors volunteer 20 hours, and seniors must complete 25 hours, half of which must support their Final Senior Service Project. This past school year, 40 students went above and beyond and volunteered an impressive 90 hours each.

Through their religion classes, students make weekly visits to nursing homes or hospice programs. Houses are open for volunteers from the school who have disabilities through a St. Michael summer basketball camp and at the McMains Children’s Development Center, volunteered in first aid with the Boy Scouts at Camp Avondale, and assisted the elderly at area nursing homes.

“I am so thankful that St. Michael High School encouraged and gave me opportunities through both the sports medicine and service hour programs to make volunteerism such an integral part of my life,” said Haynes. “Through sports medicine, I now have a career, and by volunteering at so many diverse and unique places for the past four years, I now have a passion for giving back that will always be a part of who I am.”

Another Gold Service Award winner, volunteering more than 90 hours to the community and winning the male Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta Christian Service Award, was Kolbe Fletcher, who is known for his care and concern for others at his school, church and throughout his community. He has served his high school at Vacation Bible School, open house, new student orientation, the technology services team and class retreats. At Our Lady of Mercy Church he is a member of the choir and an altar server. Most importantly, he gives witness to his pro-life belief through his commitment to the unborn. Whether it is the life of a woman considering abortion, or her unborn child, or the life of his own sister or brother who struggles with the disabilities of autism and cerebral palsy, Fletcher serves. He prays at the Delta Abortion Clinic, takes part in the Baton Rouge Life Chain and attended the last five March for Life Pilgrimages. Fletcher also serves at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and area nursing homes on a regular basis. He has applied for admittance at St. Joseph Seminary this fall.

“These are just two examples of students who were volunteering through the fabric of high school life at St. Michael,” said Fletcher. “Service and ministry are and will always be a strong part of St. Michael the Archangel as an institute of higher learning.”

NATIONAL HISTORY DAY COMPETITION – Catholic of Pointe Coupée seventh-grade Louisiana history class participated in a contest to celebrate Louisiana History Day that was sponsored by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans. Renee Treppagnier, left, and Ava Martin won the regional competition that was held at the West Baton Rouge Parish Museum in Port Allen. Their first-place project depicting the historic locks in Plaquemine qualified them for the state competition held at the National World War II Museum, where they once again placed first. The girls represented Catholic of Pointe Coupée in the National History Day competition at the University of Maryland in June. Photo provided by Catholic High School of Pointe Coupée

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