



# Alumni Newsletter

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## SAINT PATRICK'S ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

JUNE/JULY 2020

Dear St. Patrick Alum,

Although the school year officially ended at St. Patrick's Grade School on May 15, 2020, the students have not been seated in their classrooms with their fellow classmates since Friday, March 13, 2020. The Illinois Coronavirus Shelter-in-Place Order went into effect on March 21, 2020, and the students finished their academic term through distance learning. I have missed seeing and hearing their vibrancy during lunch and recess periods. I have also missed having the opportunity to celebrate Mass with them each Friday.

Frequently, I find myself thinking of our alumni, wherever you may now be. I have never met most of you, but I am conscious of the fact that, at one time, your voices and chatter filled the classrooms and halls of our school building, and you offered up your prayers from the pews in our church. I pray that your prayers have been answered in ways that have deepened your faith, strengthened your Catholic identity, and brought you closer to Our Lord.

In the Book of Proverbs, you will find the verse that says, "Raise up a child in the way of the Lord and he will not depart from it." (Prov. 22:6). All of us have probably wandered far and wide in this world, but planted within us is the seed of faith by baptism, nourished by the Holy Eucharist, and brought to great power by Confirmation. The pandemic, with the way it so radically changed our daily lives in such a short amount of time, has made me realize that no one's life is ever really "comfortable," or even stable, for that matter. Things can change on a dime, and we are constantly making adjustments to a "new normal." However, there is a stability and solid ground we can all stand upon, and that is the rock of our faith, Jesus Christ. In the end, this is what will matter the most because it has the potential for enduring into eternity.

As you know, the greater part of our mission at St. Patrick's Catholic Grade School is to plant that seed of faith within the lives of our youth and help it grow. As alumni, you are an important part of our continuing mission, not only by the way you support us materially, but by the way you live your life out in the world, demonstrating the Beatitudes.

Here are some of the material benefits of your contribution: because of the governor's Shelter-in-Place Order, we had to cancel our Pot-O'-Gold fundraising event, our parish's major solicitation for funds. As it relates to the school, these funds help support our purchase of textbooks, safety and security measures, and technology. Many of you responded to a financial appeal following the cancellation of our Pot-O'-Gold fundraiser. Your donations amounted to \$10,754.00! We greatly appreciate this. Your donations will allow us to supply working Chromebooks for our students as they join virtual classrooms from home, and we will also be able to stock our cleaning supply cabinets in anticipation of the Fall 2020 school year.

Here are some of the spiritual benefits of your contribution: when the world sees you living your Catholic faith, loving God and neighbor, you build us up. In fact, you help build up the Kingdom of God, making a more just world. Please know of our prayers for each one of you, and if it has been awhile since you have been back to St. Patrick's, please come visit us.

May Our Lady protect you and your families!

Fr. John

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Dear Alumni,

Imagine back to the time when you were a student at St. Patrick School. Pick any grade level Preschool through eighth grade. Imagine going through a normal school year, doing your lessons, participating in a sport or some other extra-curricular activity, enjoying recess, being with friends and classmates, and attending the All School Mass and Adoration on Fridays. Imagine looking forward to Easter and spring breaks and warmer weather. Oh, and track season was just underway, a sign that summer was surely on the horizon. All of a sudden, in the first week of the fourth quarter, school, as you knew it, halted for the rest of the school year! You had no idea this was going to happen. Just Imagine!

This is what happened to the students of St. Patrick School on Friday, March 13, no less, with the COVID19 pandemic "Shelter in Place" orders mandated by the State and U.S. governments. Our students prepared for an early leave of absence from their classrooms and classmates with no realization that they would not be back in the physical school for the rest of the year. We thought, hoped, and prayed it would only be for a short time. It helped that spring and Easter breaks were in that timeframe. Alas! This was not to be. School, as we knew it, terminated for the remaining of the 2019-2020 school year as directives regarding the coronavirus pandemic and the mandates kept extending the "Shelter in Place" order. However, St. Patrick School did not end classes or learning. Our teachers immediately went to work learning Google Classroom applications and other digital software, preparing E-Learning lessons, and devoting hours and hours to create interesting and manageable lessons for students to complete at home and return through their Google Classroom to the teachers. Our teachers are our heroes! Our parents helped with managing the lessons their children completed at home while many of them were also working from their homes or as essential workers in the community. They, too, had challenges in helping their children

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# MEMORIES

## Don Noe, 1975

It is hard to believe that it has been 45 years since my class graduated from St. Pat's. Memories? Lots of great memories of friends and teachers but here are a few:

**Mrs. Sparling, our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher** – The self-proclaimed “Big Bird” held court every day in “the Dugout” (her name for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade classroom in the basement of the school.) She was a small lady with a big persona. Big glasses, bright red lipstick, an infectious smile and an off-the-charts enthusiasm to teach important lessons to a bunch of know-it-all adolescents before kicking us out of her “nest” and sending us off to high school. What a fun year!

**The basketball coaches** were all role models to me – Coach Dennis Landry in 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>, Coach Bob Facker in 7<sup>th</sup> and Mr. Greg Martin in 8<sup>th</sup>. I was always impressed that Coach Landry, who wasn't a teacher and didn't have a son on the team, would volunteer so much time coaching and I am so grateful he did. Coach Facker always exuded this coolness that I would try to emulate later in my volunteer youth sports coaching days. And Coach Martin – the yelling, the bulging eyes, the “BASELINE, down and back go!” when someone screwed up and we were all destined to run lines and the grueling “5 in 55s”. His motivational tactics apparently worked as we had a 17-3 record as 8<sup>th</sup> graders. I admit I “borrowed” a few of his lines/tactics in my later coaching days too.

**Sr. Mary Ann and the lesson she taught us about “volunteering”** – In those days, eighth grade boys were required (or so we thought) to be “patrol boys” (crossing guards at the street corners surrounding the school). Back when we were in the second grade looking up at these big guys wearing the orange reflecting belts telling us it was OK to cross the street, we thought “How cool is that? Can't wait to do that!” However, several years later when we were cool junior high students, being a patrol boy was not high on our list of things to do. Sr. Mary Ann made an announcement on the intercom “Tomorrow at lunch, I will be in the gym signing up volunteers from the 7<sup>th</sup> grade for next year's patrol boy duties. Please stop by.”

The discussion among us 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys on the playground later went something like this:

“Did you hear M.A.? She said ‘volunteers’ for patrol boy duty.”

“Yeah, I thought we HAD to do it.”

“Well, if we don't have to, I'm not freezing my \_\_\_ off wearing a dorky orange belt telling a bunch of little kids when to cross the street.”

“Me neither.”

“All in agreement?”

“OK, we won't sign up.”

Two days later, Sister Mary Ann was back on the intercom: “I would just like to thank the two fine, young gentlemen in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade who volunteered yesterday for patrol boy duty next year. For the rest of you boys who chose not to volunteer, I'm sure you will be pleased to know that in lieu of your patrol boy duties next year, you will be attending a new mandatory safety class before school every day in my office.”

The subsequent discussion on the playground went something like this:

“Mandatory safety class? Before school? Every day? In M.A.'s office?!?!?!?”

“Noe, you got to go talk to her. Tell her we want to be patrol boys!”

“Me? Why me?!?”

Randy Holzhauer: “Because you are the only one of us she will believe!”

“Thanks a lot, guys!”

Next day I knocked on Sister Mary Ann's office door:

“Come in Donald” (I think she knew I hated to be called “Donald” but took some delight in it anyway.)

“Good morning, Sister. As representative on behalf of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys, I would like to inform you that we have given it considerable thought and reconsideration and we have all decided to gladly volunteer to be patrol boys next year.”

“Donald, tell your fellow classmates that I accept their gracious offer.”

“Oh, and Donald, thanks for seeing it my way.”

Wishing all my friends and classmates from St. Pat's the best. If you have time while social distancing, please send me an email at [dnoe1015@gmail.com](mailto:dnoe1015@gmail.com) to catch up. Also, if you have the ability to do so, I encourage you to “volunteer” to donate whatever amount you can to the COVID-19 Relief Fund for St. Patrick School mentioned by Father John in his recent newsletter. Our alma mater is facing some serious financial concerns and can use some help from all of us who benefitted from the lessons learned inside her walls. Take care! Stay safe!

## Did you know ...

The Biagini family owns the city's first legal backyard chickens. Al Biagini (1982) was granted a special use permit this past fall by the Washington City Council to have chickens at his home. Al and his son Josh (2018) built a chicken coop under a raised deck and have an enclosed outdoor run for them in the back yard.

Celebrating 40 years of teaching at St. Patrick's is Mrs. Chris Kapraun. She began in August 1980 as the fifth grade home room teacher. She replaced alumni Mary Jo Dougherty (1969) and taught along side Sister Marie Leona and Miss Chris Razo. She said this was the only place she ever interviewed.....and she is still here! Also celebrating remarkable careers in Catholic education are Miss Anita Keck (20 years) and Mrs. Kathy Laylock (30 years). Kathy is mother to Jennifer (1982), Melissa (1994), and Kelly (1997) and has been working in our school cafeteria. Alumni John Cummings (1969) has also taught 40 years. He is teaching at Peoria Notre Dame High School and has had an outstanding record coaching girls' track.

This year's top ten graduating students at Washington Community High School include four alumni from our class of 2016. Graduating #8 in her class is Morgan Klein. Her twin brother, Brady Klein, is Salutatorian at #3. The top two students are Nate Faivre and Edward Andrews with both being named Valedictorian. Congratulations to all our graduates!

This past fall, Mr. and Mrs. Gene (and Lori) Gangloff, parents of Brian (1979), Lisa (1982), and Beth (1984), donated many hours of their time and talent to create a better learning environment for our young students. Gene with his woodworking skills and Lori with her painting and decorating knowledge teamed up with many others and worked to revamp a classroom in the basement of the school. This classroom is now called the Atrium and will be used for the Catechesis of the Good Shepard program for our preschool and primary school students.

This year, St. Pat's graduates 16 students from 8th grade. Of the 8 boys and 8 girls to graduate, most are going to WCHS but 1 student will go on to Peoria Notre Dame High School and 1 will go to East Peoria High School. Eighth Grade Awards went to the following students: Georgia Williams received the Scholastic Award as well as the Crowning of Mary Award with attendants Lauren Campomanes and Penelope McVay; Lauren and Penelope also won the Clarence Linsley Christian Award with Patrick Hatton and Brian Vallianatos; Class Spirit Award went to Georgia Williams; Angela Linsley Volleyball Award went to Isabella Ozella, daughter of Scott (1989) and Esmeralda (Ripley) Ozella (1994); Isabella also won the Josephine Goebel Sportsmanship Award; the Mark Burroughs Sportsmanship Award went to Kaden Griswold and Brian Vallianatos; Female Athlete Award went to Natalie VanDeVoorde; Male Athlete Award went to Madden Mendoza and Max Newton; Band Directors Award went to Patrick Hatton and Benjamin Kunka; Patrick also won the Accelerated Reader Honors Recognition Award.



This photo is the 1964-65 "Heavyweight" boys basketball team. Back then, there was not a 7th grade or 8th grade team..... only light-weights and heavy-weights. Best guess L-R: Keith Smith, Allen Ravenscraft, Mike Dougherty, Kevin Duke, Bobby Howell, John Memmer, Bob Scherer, Jim Schmidt, Mike Grebner, Jerry Brown, Larry Bergman, and David Hartter. Coaches Eddie Orr and Mr. Chuck Grant are kneeling. This is one of many photos as well as memories on the St. Patrick's School Alumni, Washington IL FaceBook page.

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If you have had an address change, please complete and return this form to St. Pat's School, 100 Harvey, Washington, IL 61571.  
You may also email the information to: [alumni@stpatswashington.com](mailto:alumni@stpatswashington.com).

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**ALUMNI  
NEWSLETTER  
JUNE-JULY 2020**

Recently, you may have received a letter from our pastor regarding support for our school. The response has been wonderful and they are very grateful. In just a few weeks, donations of over \$10,000.00 was received. This is to be used to purchase and/or update our technology. Approximately 60 Chromebooks will need updating at a cost of about \$300.00 per unit.

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navigate this new way of school. Learning and staying focused on lessons in the home environment is not the same as the school classrooms. Our parents are our champions!

Parents, teachers, and students all had to learn technologies and find balance as everyone worked through the new challenges of virtual learning versus classroom learning. Even our preschoolers, with the help of their parents, were able to complete lessons from their teachers. Through the progression of this uncharted territory, families may have dealt with tears and frustration, but in the end, hopefully, they experienced the joy of their accomplishments. The partnership among St. Patrick School faculty, parents, and students is to be commended!

We look forward to closing this school year and begin preparing for the 2020-2021 school year now that formal classroom and E-Learning lessons are completed. What the new school year will look like or when we will be able to start officially, we still do not know. It is still our hope to have a live graduation ceremony for our eighth graders sometime this summer and recognize their achievements at St. Patrick School.

As this most unusual school year closes, we continue to pray for the safety and well-being of all our students and their families. We pray for an end to the pandemic and a return to our classrooms. Please join us in our prayers. We miss our students and look forward to seeing them again soon!

Blessings,  
Mrs. Doreen Shipman, Principal

Please keep in your prayers those who have recently died: Mrs. Jackie Chasco, Mrs. Barbara Rippon-Bradle, Mr. Robert Howell, Mrs. Barb Campbell, Mrs. Connie Burroughs-Minch, Mr. Ron LaFond, Mrs. Wilma Opsomer, Mrs. Susan Ingolia, Mrs. Francis Thomas, Mr. Jack Stromberger, Mr. Robert Curley, Mrs. Deb Tranel, and alumni Gene VanAntwerp (1971), Linda Thar-Walwer (1969), Patricia Darow-Bailey (1967), Ron Alessi (1968), Mark Grawe (1978), David Lakin (1984), Brad Birkner (1978), Sharon Ragan-Simpson (1971), Dennis Guimond (1967), Brian Brooks (1967), Jane Haas-Hunt (1956), Tom Thomas (1958), and Mike Venzon (1970). Also remember Virginia Ann Pokryfke, daughter of Nancy McCann-Rager (1957) and Kimberly Eccles, daughter of Alice Bergman-Nieukirk (1958). May these families find peace in God's grace.