



Fine arts indeed . . .

SMC enjoys a rich, storied history in drama, debate, forensics, and art

Eleven years of learning, 11 years of teaching, and 11 years of friendships is how I can best describe the time I spent at St. Mary's-Colgan High School.

My teaching job at Colgan was my first. I was definitely a rookie, and I must say that I learned much about teaching, learning, and discipline. I once told some-

The talent at Colgan never failed to amaze me then, and it still amazes me today.

— **Bob Tindel**

one that I did not really feel comfortable teaching until about my eighth year on the job, and even after 28 years, I am still learning what works and what does not work in the

classroom.

However, I did learn so much while teaching at Colgan, and I value to this day the support I received from my fellow teachers in the likes of Sister Victorine, Sister Paula, Sister Helen Joseph, Father Ken, and Pat Forbes and Frank Crespino.

They were all very supportive and offered advice when needed.

I can remember starting out teaching various levels of English classes, as well as the speech and theatre classes. At the start of my helm, Colgan had a limited speech and theatre program. After about the first five years we finally had a theatre curriculum that included courses in Theatre I, Theatre II, and Stagecrafts.

We finally decided that if we were to have a well-rounded speech curriculum at Colgan we needed to offer forensics and debate. So with the much needed assistance and love of Barbara Bateman, I

launched the debate and forensics program, and wow, did it ever take off.

I would never have dreamed that only after a few short years of existence that Colgan would be bringing home so many honors and trophies from, not only invitational tournaments, but also three state championships in speech and four straight

See *Tindel*, page 6 →



Teacher Bob Tindel works with the student chorus during the 1981-82 school year.

Teamwork, support are keys to success

Greetings to all of our alumni! This issue is dedicated to the many students, teachers, and staff who have participated in the Fine Arts Department of our school. They are many! As you well know, the success of any program depends on the leadership of individual students and teachers.

We have been blessed over the years with



Fr. Tom Stroot

Pastor

many talented, enthusiastic students. With the guidance and leadership of the faculty, we have seen great productions in the theater and great individual performances in debate and forensics.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the many parents who have been in the wings providing assistance and support. In the few years I have been here at St. Mary's, I truly have been

See *Fr. Tom*, page 7 →

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So many memories, so little space

So many memories of my time at St. Mary's-Colgan, and so little space. I remember the support I received from the faculty and staff, the Fine Arts Committee (an indispensable aid!), alumni, and friends of SMC to get things going again.

Debate help from Tess Bateman and Jim Emerson. Wonderful performances in *Arsenic and Old Lace* from Curt Crespino, Jeff Wilbert, Pat Forbes, and Phil Dellasega (also in *Little Shop of Horrors* as "the plant's voice").

Some of the many joyful memories I have of the SMC theatre department are: Father Pat York dripping with cottage cheese in *The Nerd*; Brian Hamilton in our "take-off" of *A Christmas Carol* as Mrs. Cratchet and the ghost of Christmas past (in which he wore a pile of trash to attack Kelly Dunlavy).

Then there was Brian Wachter's memorable performances as Norm in *Present Tense* and "the nerd" in *The Nerd*; Stephen Hilt surprising everyone as Seymour in *Little Shop* (they didn't know he could sing and act so well!); Len Bogner's dancing as Snoopy in *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (those long legs really made a fun dance!); Liz Hilt and Noelle



Sister Cecelia Marie (Christine) Hammersley

Carmelites of Compeigne alive in *Song at the Scaffold*; Jenae Patterson "seeing her" in *Song of Bernadette*.

Debate and forensics for me began with RJ Wilson and freshmen. As I left SMC, the debate squad had taken fourth at State, numerous State forensics championships and medallists, CNC medallists and first-place sweepstakes, lots of first-place one-act plays, and too-many-to-be-counted individual tournament medallists and sweepstakes trophies.

A few fun memories: John Curran's debate plan on reducing ozone depletion by reducing cow "gas expulsion"; Matt Burton having to wake up a debate judge in the middle of a regional tournament; traveling to State forensics and avoiding the Andover tornado because of a needed

"pit stop"; Aubrey McLean having to catch BJ Barnes as he flies through the air in *IDA*; Matt Emerson, Andrea Pommier, Travis Donnelly, and John Curran competing at the National CNFL tournament in New York City.

There was Steve Lomshek – our ever-faithful bus driver; Lori Bogner and any poem she did; picking a one-act with the qualifications that the cast, set, and costumes had to fit in the car; packing auditoriums so they could see the one-act *To Burn a Witch*; the never-ending filing for extemp; Dan Kerr and Ryan Moodie making Shakespeare come alive.

So many wonderful memories – and so little space to recount them all. During my eight years I saw many students gain confidence, poise, and a venue in which they could succeed. Through their determination and talent, I witnessed the "comeback" of SMC's debate and forensics squad as a team that was viewed as successful and challenging by schools much larger than our own. What wonderful memories I have of my students and my time at SMC! Too little space – too many wonderful students!

Sister Cecelia Marie (Christine) Hammersley, IHM

Students garner national honor with 'Pittsburg Poverty Project'

When many people think of teenagers, they may think of uncaring people with a selfish attitude. However, this is not the case with students from St. Mary's-Colgan High School.

The students recently showed their compassionate sides as they participated in a multimedia arts contest sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). The students were challenged to come up with solutions to the problem of poverty. Their ideas were to be presented in multimedia form, which could include poems, art, and even videos or Web sites.

Students from St. Mary's decided to do a project, which they named "The Pittsburg Poverty Project." The project was a collaboration of the religion and art departments of the school and included paintings, poems, Web sites, and videos submitted by the students.

Because the school was allowed to submit only one entry, sophomore students Riley Dutton, Tony D'Amico, Ankit Lal, and Ian Brown created a video presentation that showcased all of the great work entailed in The Pittsburg Poverty Project.

The finished video included interviews with the students



SMC students who created the video, from left, Riley Dutton, Tony D'Amico, Ankit Lal, and Ian Brown.

regarding their pieces, footage of the display at the Meadowbrook Mall in Pittsburg, and samples of the videos and Web sites submitted by the students. The video was created solely using the state-of-the-art equipment at SMC.

Recognizing these efforts, the CCHD awarded The Pittsburg Poverty Project the grand prize, and the four students who created the final entry were flown to Jacksonville, Florida to receive the award on behalf of all the students. The students were awarded \$500 to donate to a CCHD charity. They were also awarded an additional \$500 that they decided to donate to the Wesley House in Pittsburg.

Tama Dutton, High School Religion Teacher

High School

Full slate of debate, forensics, and theater await high schoolers

St. Mary's-Colgan is attempting to recapture the spirit and exuberance that have been a tradition throughout our history. After a brief hiatus, the students will be returning to a full schedule of debate, forensics, and theater.

The heritage of success on the debate and forensics stage was inaugurated by Sisters Victorine and Eustacia, who gave the reins to Bob Tindel, Chris Hammersly (Sister Cecelia Marie), Cheryl Beese, and Debra Vance. The mantle has now passed to Floyd McKibben, who will lead our current group through the rigors of preparation for the coming year.

The theater, debate, and forensics program has provided a variety of outcomes for our school family. The beautiful, comedic, joyful results that accompany our work are a source of fond remembrance for countless graduates.

The growth of individual personalities as a result of participation is a hallmark of these activities. It is with renewed anticipation that we await the upcoming school year.

All of these efforts will be enhanced by the utilization of our refurbished, invigorated auditorium setting. Former students are delighted with the atmosphere and attractiveness of the 235-seat theater setting.

Five years ago the old auditorium was renovated and a new sound system has been added. This summer a new lighting system is being installed to further create the proper atmosphere for our thespians. We pray that continued blessings will follow our efforts and the "beat" will go on for continued success by our productive fine arts program.

Pat Forbes, Principal

Junior high building up arts programs

At present we don't have any specific fine arts course in the junior high, although the diocese is encouraging fine arts at all levels. We currently are limited in regard to class schedules but have begun discussion of possible ways to incorporate the arts.

One activity that took place this past school year was a salute to our veterans on Nov. 11. Students who played musical

Junior High School

instruments brought them in and performed for the rest of the junior high, which sang patriotic songs.

This fall the high school is anticipating putting on a major production, and we are hoping to have the junior high involved in the performance.

Wayne Cichon, Principal

Music program growing by leaps and bounds

Music Teacher Mrs. Duran works very closely with Fr. Tom and Fr. Jarrod to provide religious music for the student Masses during the week. This is in correlation with the Liturgical Church Calendar. All students have music two to three times per week with Mrs. Duran.

Music classes are held upstairs in the old gymnasium. Many alumni will recall that as the old kindergarten room. Students learn various songs as well as history and composers. St. Mary's currently offers band and orchestra as an extracurricular activity.

Grade School

In the month of December, the traditional Christmas program is presented at Memorial Auditorium, including singing by each class as well as seasonal instrumentals by the band and orchestra. A new tradition began last year with the addition of a spring concert by Grades K-6 at the SMC auditorium. The band and orchestra students again demonstrated their skills as they performed, and students sang various patriotic selections.

Teachers are encouraged to infuse art and music into their units of study. Several SMC teachers have received grant money to increase their music and art classroom materials. The teachers also coordinate with Mrs. Duran to prepare the students for special performances in

Students present banner following 9-11 attacks

In response to the September 11 attacks, the students, faculty, and staff of SMC created a banner that was sent to a grade school near the Pentagon.

Under the direction of SMC Art Teacher Dawn Carlson, each classroom painted a material block red, white, and blue, and each student then signed their respective block. The squares were made into a banner.

A poem of support, patriotism, and encouragement was in the center and was edged in a painted design of a sunflower and wheat to symbolize Kansas. The banner was decorated in blue and gold and ironically, those were the school colors of the recipient school.

*Nancy (Wilbert) Hicks, '74
Third Grade Teacher*

the community.

Mrs. Duran provides students the opportunity to sing at the Pittsburg State University contest. Orchestra and band students also participate with the help of Mrs. Duran, Mrs. Carol Cook, and Mr. Kirt Duffy. Mrs. Cook and Mr. Duffy volunteer their time and talent for these students.

Francis Smith, Principal

Transcript fee required

The St. Mary's-Colgan office has initiated a handling fee for the mailing of transcripts for graduates. Copies of transcripts will be mailed upon the receipt of the \$5.00 fee.

SMC Alumni Newsletter

Editors and Writers: Chris (Wilbert) Flood, Audrey (VanBecelaere) Dickey, and Tom Farmer. **Graphics:** Todd McGeorge. **Special Contributors:** Fr. Tom Stroot, Pat Forbes, Francis Smith, Wayne Cichon, Nancy (Hoff) Scott, Kari (Emerson) Spiers, Denise (Campion) Sears, Bob Tindel, Tama Dutton, Sister Cecelia Marie, Cathy (Blessant) Estenson. **Printing:** Tim Collar and Tom Dayton

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1940's



1940s

- Sister Victorine organized singing groups.
- *The Musical Review* was a popular musical show.

1950's



1950s

- Music groups formed: The Six Teens, The Royalties, The Senior Care Carolers, The Blue Notes, The Madrigals.
- The passion play, *Calvary Hill*, written by Monsignor Stremel, was presented by the parish.
- Forensics was introduced under the direction of Sister Victorine.

1960's



1960s

- Band and chorus continued to be popular.
- *Brigadoon*, the first musical, was presented under the direction of Sister Mary Patrick.

1970s

- *Hello Dolly*, directorial debut at SMC of Bob Tindel.
- The Drama Club was very popular and many plays

1970's



- were performed.
- The Fine Arts Committee was established with guidance from Fr. Ken Melaragno.

1980s

- Bob Tindel and Barbara Bateman organized Debate and Forensics squads.

Timeline of Fine Arts at St. Mary's



Source: http://stmarys-colgan.org/SMC/smc_fine_hist.html

2000's



annual event where local artists are invited to share their skills with students.

- Auditorium renovated.

- *Winners*, directorial debut at SMC of Cheryl Beese.
- *Guys and Dolls*, directorial debut at SMC of Liz Hilt.
- Forensics squad sent seven students to State.

2000s

- Fine Arts Day continues to be popular.
- SMC students attend theater performances in Kansas City.
- Theater lighting system is updated.

1990's



1990s

- Forensics squad took third place at State in 1992.
- The Drama Department continued to entertain and amaze its patrons.
- *Arsenic & Old Lace*, directorial debut at SMC of Christine Hammersly (now Sister Cecelia Marie).
- Fine Arts Day was initiated. This is an



1980's



- The Drama Department continued to produce wonderful plays.
- The Forensics squad competed at State several times and produced State Champions in 1985 and 1986.
- The Debate squad competed many times at State, bringing home fifth place in 1983, fourth place in 1984, third place in 1985, and second place in 1986.
- *Calvary Hill*, as written by Monsignor Stremel, was presented by the Alumni Association.



Debate success was homemade

Summer work prepared debaters for battle of words

It takes some hardworking and intelligent students, interested parents, a truly dedicated coach, a lot of time, and practice, practice, practice. This combination has come together many times throughout the history of St. Mary's-Colgan. Here's a secret about the successful debate squads in the 1980s:

Perhaps some of our former students who currently serve as young community leaders were initially intrigued by the offer of some home-baked chocolate cookies and a beverage. These leaders include State Representative RJ Wilson, Crawford County Commission Attorney Jim Emerson, Assistant County Attorney Steve Stockard, and present-day Mom and editor of this publication Chris (Wilbert)

Flood.

The months of June and July often found a group of SMC students arriving at the Bateman home every Tuesday afternoon. Under the supervision of Barbara Bateman, these students learned about the fundamentals of debate and began research on the national debate question.

The debate topics alternated yearly between international and national subjects and included topics such as agriculture, education, space, environment, and so forth.

The students ate the cookies, drank the beverages, and worked for two hours gathering and writing information both for (affirmative) and against (negative)



Barbara Bateman

the topic.

When school began, their minds swirled with information and goals were set for a great season. With the exception of the first year, SMC debate teams won the regional and placed at the State tournament every year.

The *real secret* of debate success during the 80s was Coach Bob Tindel. He helped to build the affirmative and negative strategy, polish the thinking and speaking abilities of these youngsters, and spent many Saturdays traveling with the squad to various Kansas schools.

Without his dedication and enthusiasm for producing winning and successful squads, those home-baked cookies and the summer preparation would have meant nothing.

Barbara (Monsour) Bateman, '56

Tindel

(Continued from page 1)

trips to the state debate tournament. The talent at Colgan never failed to amaze me then, and it still amazes me today.

What can I say about the theatre program? Fun! Fun! Fun! It all started my first year with productions of *The Miracle Worker* and the musical *Hello, Dolly*. It seemed that each year the productions became bigger, better, and more popular with the community. I still have many pictures and articles about such productions as *Funny Girl*, *Mame*, *Camelot*, *My Fair Lady*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *I Never Sang For My Father*, *Black Comedy*, and many more.

One special item I remember are the 15 students from Maresa Monsour's graduating class who played in *Fiddler on the Roof*. I think this must be a record for any school of any size, to have so many students from one graduating class who were so talented.

However, none of these productions would have been possible if it had not been for the solid support I received from parents; faculty, such as Father Ken, Sister Helen Joseph, and Maggie McNeil Ryan; and supporting help from Jo Marie Golob, June Blancho, and of course that very special man,

Frank Crespino.

Little did Frank and I know, but we were making use of interdisciplinary learning and teaching before it ever became popular when my theatre classes and his woodworking classes teamed up to build those tremendous sets for the shows. This was a valuable teaching and learning tool. Thanks, Frank, for all your assistance and support.

Well, I have rambled on long enough. I just want to close by saying that probably the most important part about being at Colgan for 11 years is all the many friendships established. I come across many former students, teachers, and parents, and we always rekindle so many wonderful memories . . . memories that I will always treasure. . . memories rich in tradition . . . a tradition that I hope will last forever at St. Mary's-Colgan High School. What a special school, what special people, and what great support. Don't ever let it die.

To close, let me paraphrase a line from *Camelot*. Once there was a spot, don't let it be forgot, a spot known as St. Mary's-Colgan High School.

God Bless all of you!!

Robert J. Tindel, former Theatre, Debate, and Forensics Instructor

The things that we learned

Bound together by songs, story, and stage paint, challenged by ailments and attitudes, the show must go on. The hours and hours of practice, blood, sweat, and tears were not always fun, but the thrill of the performance was immeasurably wonderful.

My sister, Bridget, was with me during my junior and senior years. We were fiercely competitive, but we were united by theatre.

I learned how to push through fatigue, fear, and exhaustion to finish a project. I was introduced to leadership and organizational skills, public speaking, and the art of people management. Bob Tindel created opportunities for us that should not have been available in a small school.

Denise (Campion) Sears, '82

Sorry for oversights

SMC students have had great successes and reached high levels in the area of fine arts throughout the school's history. We regret that we are not able to mention in this issue of the newsletter every production, ribbon, and trophy that the SMC fine arts program has produced.

Fine Arts Committee thanks you for support

Generous donations, grant help fund several major auditorium improvements

SMC has always been very proud of its fine arts performances and the beautiful SMC auditorium. During the 2001-2002 school year, the Fine Arts Committee supported various projects to improve this facility and offer a more “user-friendly” environment for students, faculty, and guests.

The stage floor was repainted, and safer, stronger rigging was installed to support lighting and curtain hardware. Curtains were cleaned and fireproofed, and the costume and prop rooms were cleaned and organized.

As the sound equipment had been replaced not too many years ago, the Fine Arts Committee decided to focus on the lighting needs of the facility. The present lighting was found to be outdated, with a new dimming and control system needed. The lighting was still manually controlled (rather than computer-interfaced, as is the setup in many theaters today).

Wiring needed replaced, and instrumentation needed upgraded. PSU donated a set of lighting instrumentation, but the lighting controls needed to be upgraded in order for the new

lights to be installed.

To address these necessary and expensive improvements, several members of the Fine Arts Committee wrote a grant to the Pritchett Trust. This request was answered to the tune of \$17,500, which substantially helped in the purchase of the new dimmer board and its installation.

The board (\$23,736) has been ordered, and hopefully will be installed this summer. SMC staff and local expertise will be utilized to install the new wiring and the new lighting systems. Workers will also install the new lighting instruments from PSU.

Lighting will be safer, improved, and more cost-effective over time. Additional instruments and bulbs can then gradually be added as needed to bring the 40-year-old facility up to speed.

The committee thanks you for your generous support, as many alumni have already sent donations to the Theater Fund. The first production with the new lighting, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, is scheduled for December 2002. SMC welcomes everyone to come and appreciate the performance and the many improvements to the theater over this past year!

Nancy (Hoff) Scott '67

Fr. Tom

(Continued from page 1)

amazed at the talent, time, energy, enthusiasm, and effort students have given to debate, forensics, and drama, especially the great musical productions.

Drama

The fine arts, especially the Drama Department, has had some fantastic years with many great performances such as *Camelot*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, *Pippin*, *He Couldn't Marry Five*, *The Belle of Barcelona*, *In Old Vienna*, *Welcome to the Wise Hotel*, *Christmas in the Village Square*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *George M*, *My Fair Lady*, *Oklahoma*, *South Pacific*, *Cinderella*, *No, No, Nannette*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Finnian's Rainbow*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *Hello Dolly*, *Funny Girl*, *Mame*, *Arsenic and Old Lace*, *I Never Sang For My Father*, *Harvey*, *The Song of Bernadette*, several productions of *Calvary Hill*, and of course many one-act plays, dramas, and comedies.

We have had some very talented directors through the years who made it all possible.

Forensics, debate

The forensics and debate squads have had some stellar years competing very successfully against 4A, 5A, and 6A

schools, placing in the top three and even winning sweepstakes. We have had two State championships in forensics.

In spite of a small student population, SMC schools have fared well in competition, but more importantly many young men and women have been given the chance to discover and hone their talents and gifts.

Many to this day would say that their experiences in theater, music, speech, and debate have been invaluable and have helped them in their professional lives.

It was enlightening for me to look through almost all of the yearbooks and see the trends.

Did you know that St. Mary's had a marching band with snappy uniforms for more than 10 years beginning in 1955? Boys and girls glee clubs were huge for the first 15 years.

Music was always very popular whether performing on stage, in the community, or providing music for Mass and devotions in church.

When we were placing the State champion banners in the new gymnasium, I insisted that we include all State championships. Therefore we have the 1964 Class B Debate banner, the 1985 and 1986 2A Speech banners, and the 1993 2A Scholars Bowl banner hanging among all the other banners.

Organ, choir

We had some excitement recently in the parish. We had to replace the organ in the church. Fortunately, we were able to purchase a Rodgers 955 organ that came from Carnegie Hall in New York. It is truly a magnificent instrument and fits our beautiful church very well.

Our adult choir and a few voices from the Pittsburg community travelled to Europe this summer to perform at the International Choral Festival in Salzburg, Austria with Janos Cizfra as conductor. They travelled to Slovenia to give a concert, to Vienna for a concert at Gumpoldskirchen, and then to Venice where they sang the main Sunday Mass at the Cathedral of St. Mark.

Our choir is under the direction of Carol Cook, who teaches choir in the high school. Three years ago during Lent they traveled to Rome where they sang the Sunday High Mass at the Vatican and then a Mass at the Church of St. Francis in Assisi. We are proud of them and are grateful we have them for our weekly 9:00 a.m. Sunday Mass.

I pray that the Lord blesses you and your loved ones. Thank you for your continued support. We will keep all of you in prayer especially when we celebrate Mass for the high school during the school year.

**Alumni Newsletter
St. Mary's-Colgan
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Notes

Next issue to feature priests

The winter 2003 issue of the alumni newsletter will focus on the priests who have served us and led the way at SMC through the years. Share your favorite memories – both serious and fun – by sending them to Chris Flood (ctflood@ckt.net, 620-369-8909, or 6664 NE Liberty Rd, Weir, KS 66781).

We also accept submission of any other information you deem of interest to SMC alumni. Thank you.

Individual state champions?

We would like to honor individual state winners and state runners-up for activities including golf, track, swimming, tennis, Debate, and Forensics by displaying the individuals' names in the Activity Center. We are in the process of compiling an historical list and ask your help. If you or a family member earned a state medal, please call the high school at (620) 231-4690, ext. 46, or e-mail Tina Jones, jonest@stmarys-colgan.org.

SMC alumni in military

Senior Airman Leo Brown, Air Force Reserves, 442nd Fighter Wing Public Affairs, Whiteman AFB, MO; **Capt. Douglas Lomshek**, Medical Company, US Army Medical Department Activity, Fort Leavenworth, KS; **LCDR Matt Webber**, AIMD/IM-1, USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN-72), FPOAP 96612-2872.

New graduates set goals for future

The number of SMC alumni increased by 34 on May 15. Recently we asked these graduates to share some of their fondest memories of high school and plans for the future.

The majority of respondents listed athletic success as their favorite high school memory. "My fondest memory of high school will always be the success that we had in athletics," said Andy Wachter. "Winning six state championships is not something that comes around very often."

In addition to that were some favorites that many of us can remember: singing to the nuns after games, homecoming, prom, and being with friends.

In the fall many of the graduates will begin college. They will be attending PSU, KU, K-State, Creighton, and Wichita State. Several of the graduates will be participating in college athletics and are looking forward to the opportunities ahead.

The graduates are both excited and nervous about getting the chance to be more responsible for their lives and making their own decisions.

"I'm looking forward to being on my own and having that independence and freedom," said Rachelle D'Amico. "I worry about making mistakes, but I know that is a part of life and you learn from your mistakes."

They have some concern about what the future will bring and how they will adjust to new places and people but are for the most part very optimistic about their plans. They are looking forward to meeting new people, being independent, and enjoying college life in general. The graduates look forward to learning more about their chosen professions and the endless opportunities that are ahead of them.

These young adults also became more grounded in their faith and feel this will help them make better decisions when they are on their own. "I am prepared to deal with social issues and succeed in the world," said Eric Clawson.

Our newest alums have much to be proud of and bright futures ahead of them. We wish them the best.

Kari (Emerson) Spiers, '86