



# St. Mary's Past Students' Association

NEWSLETTER ♦ MARCH 2007

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## Have you met Miss Maria Cheung, our Acting Primary School Principal?

Our PSA chairlady Annie invited me to write something to past St. Marians. Well, I dare not refuse, only because I am a St. Marian, a name which I am so proud of.

I remember when I was a student, I was such a quiet and timid member of the class. But even though I was a "bookworm", my school days in St. Mary's were full of challenges and laughter, as most of my fellow classmates had experienced. Those days are precious parts of our memories.



*Big smiles from Miss Cheung and her students.*

I am also amazed to have been a teacher of our primary section for nearly 30 years. After walking through this journey of education for years, I now understand what Jesus said, "You did not choose me; I chose you ....." (Jn 15:8) I am lucky to have been chosen, and to remain part of this family of St. Mary's, to work together, to learn together, to share together and to dream together. This is the place where I received quality secondary education, during the days of my golden age, where I was moulded with high values and attitudes.

I have never thought of becoming the headmistress until last year, when I was appointed the acting principal after Sr. Virginia's retirement. I found myself scared and at lost for some months. It is a totally different matter to be the principal when compared to being a teacher. I can tell you hundreds of reasons how limited I am, even though I used to be a very senior member of the teaching staff. A sense of disappointment also rose in my heart, when I thought that there would be no more sisters in the office, and no more familiar and symbolic characters whom we greet everyday, which had been so natural and usual in the past. No wonder some girls called me "Sister", and a girl even asked why I didn't dress like Sr. Virginia. So, in their young mind, "Principal" equals "Sister".

Canossian education emphasizes much on "Formation of Heart". What people treasure most in St. Marians is the beauty of our heart - our dedication, our charity, humility, faithfulness and generosity. This is the core value of the school mission and is actually the most meaningful element of education. We are all fruits of Canossian education. Let us continue to cherish our tradition, which our beloved Canossian sisters have built up over the century.

As I turn to a new page of my career, new challenges and responsibilities are waiting for me. I have to go back to the beginning, to learn like a child. Really, there are lots for me to learn, to listen, to see and to reflect everyday.

"Of Our Lady the name bearing ..... Live St. Mary's ever more!"

Maria Cheung (Class of 1976)

## PSA News - BBQ

Some 400 St. Marians and their families enjoyed a lovely evening on 21 October 2006 at the school campus, barbecuing and catching up with teachers and friends. The PSA BBQ, which was the first of its kind, was met with overwhelming response. All the 33 stoves were fully subscribed in a matter of days. Also joining the event were Sr. Rosangela (Principal of 1973-77), Sr. Bernadette (current Principal), Sr. Virginia, Mrs. Winnie Hung and a dozen teachers.



*Classmates enjoyed themselves at the PSA BBQ on campus...and look at those chairs!*



*Thanks to our janitors who worked all day for our event.*

Many thanks to Sr. Bernadette for allowing us to mess up the basketball courts which have proven to be a perfect site for the BBQ. Thanks also to Mr. Philip Lee and his team, who have put up perfect lighting for the evening. Of course, we must not forget our janitors, who did most of the preparatory work, from setting up the stoves to cleansing the playground after the event!

## PSA News - Joint Action Against the Bars Outside St. Mary's

The School (both SMCC and SMCS), the two Parent-teacher Associations and PSA are joining hands in fighting against the proliferation of bars and karaokes in the vicinity of Austin Avenue and Kimberley Road. Girls of earlier vintage may recall that the School's neighbourhood had always been a quiet residential district. However, in recent years, there has been an incremental proliferation of bars and karaokes. We consider that we need to air our objection to such establishments.



*Saying "No" to bars.*

Between September 2006 and February 2007, three establishments have applied to the Liquor Licensing Board (酒牌局) for liquor licences. We have lodged objection to all three cases. Apart from submitting our grounds for objection in writing, we also attended the Board's public hearing to air our concerns. Whether our objection would be successful remains to be seen, but this will likely be a lengthy battle, given the large number of bars in the area.

## PSA News - Upgrading the School's History Archive

Together with the School and the SMCC Parent-teacher Association, we are continuing our efforts to upgrade the School's History Archive, which is located on Level 4 of the Magdalene Building. We hope to bring back as much "collective memory" as possible about school life in St. Mary's, as well as the good work of the Canossian Sisters and the Catholic Church in Hong Kong. Wendy Pang (1977), Maria Lee (1984), Rebecca Cheung (1992), Celia Ho (2001), Queena Chow (2004), Karen Tse (2004), Muriel Cheng (2004), Winnie Chan (2004) and Vien Tsang (2004) have kindly agreed to assist in this meaningful task.

### Do you have artifacts or photos of old St. Mary's?

Do you or your family members have old photos or artifacts of St. Mary's, like school uniform, badges, exercise books, report cards or certificates etc, particularly those before the 1970s? If so, kindly consider donating or lending them to the School for reproduction or display. You can contact the School Secretary Mrs Karen Lui at 2724 2771 or [karenlui@smcc-canossian.org](mailto:karenlui@smcc-canossian.org), or the PSA Chairman Ms Annie Choi at 9192 3062 or [annieshchoi@hotmail.com](mailto:annieshchoi@hotmail.com).



*The Archive is on Level 4 of the Magdalene Building.*

## Teachers' News - Mr. Geoffrey Oliver

Mr. Oliver is more than an English teacher. He is an icon. Yes, he is the icon of drama in St. Mary's. In the past two decades, he has led St. Mary's to produce some 20 drama and musicals, most of which were large-scale performances involving hundreds of girls. It is no exaggeration to say that no other school in Hong Kong have been able to match this record of annual or biennial drama productions.

Mr. Oliver was visiting his brother, who was with the British Army, when he first came to Hong Kong in 1979. Having fallen in love with this vibrant city, he decided to stay a little longer and thus joined St. Mary's as a supply English teacher. This stay subsequently turned out to be a 27-year stay, during which Mr. Oliver continued to teach English Language and Drama in St. Mary's.



*Mr. Oliver, enjoying greening work in his garden and plant nursery in Kent, UK.*



*An unbelievably slim Mr. Oliver, serving as the masters of ceremony with Mrs Simmy Wong in a school event in the early 1980s.*

Girls called him "Lo-ban" (老闆). He was their teacher, mentor, role model, and as the name "Lo-ban" suggests, their boss in their drama ventures. He inspired in them the invincible will to do the best and be the best; he injected in them the daring spirit to dream the impossible dream and to reach the unreachable star; he showed them the power of determination, the beauty of one's own creation, the mighty spirit of teamwork and cooperation.....Had it not been for the drama productions, which allowed no room for "don't-knows" or "can't-dos", the girls would not have imagined that they could, with their own hands, build a 20' tall Noah's Ark on stage, or make fancy Egyptian costumes, or compose lovely music pieces. "You Can Do It!" That's what he told the girls, one generation after another.

It is not surprising that people wonder how he would spend his time in Kent in Southeast England after his retirement, having devoted practically all his time in drama in St. Mary's since the 1980s. "I would likely continue with my creative writing and drama productions, perhaps with a local drama group in his hometown, and may also assist in language and drama training in UK schools."

Well, we do have some good news. The Past Students' Association is now working on an arrangement whereby Mr. Oliver will be able to continue his drama in St. Mary's. If everything works well, we may begin to see his drama again in the spring of 2008!!



*(left) Handsome scholar Leung Shan-bak (梁山伯) expressing his love in lyrics of 樓臺會 for ChuK Ying-toi (祝英台) - Mr. Oliver did his first Chinese opera in 1980 to raise funds for the Cambodians.*



*(right) Young Mr. Oliver posing for a snapshot with Sr. Ida Sala (Principal 1979-1991).*

## School News - Heritage Buildings in SMCC



*Students posing for their class photo at the St. Michael Building in 1930.*

The St. Michael Building & the Main Building of St. Mary's have been included in the list of Grade II Historic Buildings in Hong Kong (i.e. buildings of special merit, and efforts should be made to preserve them selectively.) Only 4 secondary schools are on the list. The other 3 are King's College, King George V School & St. Stephen's College, Stanley. Another 8 schools are on the Grade III list.

Some interesting information related to the two buildings:

- The St. Michael Building, formerly known as the Chatham Road Building, was built in 1924. It was originally a 2-storey building, and the top floor was added a few years later. For 83 years, the building has served as classrooms for St. Marians.
- The Main Building was built in 1930, first with the left wing (i.e. up to the General Office). The right wing was subsequently added to the building in 1935, so as to provide more classrooms and special rooms for St. Marians.
- Before 1953, the chapel was located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the Main Building, and the current chapel was the School's gymnasium. The gym was moved to the current location when the School Hall complex was completed in 1953. The chapel was then relocated to the present site, and has provided shelter for the mind and soul of thousands of St. Marians ever since.



*Photo of the Main Building taken in 1935.*



*The St. Michael Building and the Main Building, sheltering the school campus from the hustle and bustle of Tsimshatsui, and nurturing generations of St. Marians through the years.*

## Heritage Building at the Canossian Headquarters on Caine Road



*The Sacred Heart Chapel*

The Sacred Heart Chapel, which is located at the Canossian Headquarters on Caine Road, is also on the list of Grade II historic buildings. The chapel, built in 1907, is celebrating its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, due to the presence of termites, its roof collapsed. The cost for the restoration works is around HK\$10 million. To date, friends, students and alumnae of Canossian schools have donated about \$7 million.

So far, St. Marians have been the largest source of donors among all Canossian schools. The Provincial Superior, Sr. Anna Maria Kwan, has expressed her deepest gratitude to St. Marians for their generosity and love. As further donation is needed to enable the restoration works to continue, we appeal to your generous support for the cause. Please see page 8 of this newsletter regarding the donation details.

## Class Reunion News

The **Class of 1977** will hold its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion on 25 August 2007 (Saturday). There will be a tour of the school, to be followed by a dinner. Some girls will be flying all the way back for the event. For further details, please contact Amy Yung at [amy@discover-me.com](mailto:amy@discover-me.com) or 9135 7000.

The **Class of 1997** will hold its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary reunion on 7 July 2007 (Saturday) from 5pm to 9pm at the school. Finger snack will be served. For further details, please contact Juliana Wong at [keroppijuli@gmail.com](mailto:keroppijuli@gmail.com) or 9034 6207.

**Organizing a reunion for your class? Let our Membership Secretary know and we can include your news on the newsletter and the website! Email to [stmaryspsa@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspsa@gmail.com).**

## Overseas Alumnae News

The **St. Mary's Canossian College Alumni Association (Toronto)** celebrated its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 25 & 26 November 2006. The first evening was a Chinese dinner happily attended by 20 tables of St. Marians, Sr. Esther Ling (Principal 1991-2000), friends and family members, as well as representatives from 12 Catholic Joint Schools Alumni Association. The second day comprised a mass and yum-cha afterwards.

The Association's Annual Christmas Dinner will be held on the first week of December. Do get in touch with Katherine Hauw, Chairlady of the Association, at (416) 332-8733 or [jao@ca.inter.net](mailto:jao@ca.inter.net) if you happen to be in Ontario around that time.



*Sr. Esther Ling flew all the way from San Francisco to join St. Marians in Toronto.*



*Sr. Cecilia Cham, Spiritual Directress of the Canossian Colleges Alumnae Association, spent a happy evening with Canossian girls in*

The **Canossian Colleges Alumnae Association (British Columbia, Canada)** held its Christmas party on 2 December 2006. The party was in the form of a Chinese dinner, with hundreds of girls from various Canossian schools attending.

The Association will be having a very eventful year in 2007, starting with a one-day Lenten Retreat to be held on 10 March 2007 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish. This will be followed by a pilgrimage to Europe from 8 to 22 May, which will cover Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and Austria.

The highlight of the year will be the Association's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration to be held on 2 December 2007 (Sunday). If you are interested in joining the events, please contact Teresa Au at (604) 506-0283 / [teresaleeau@gmail.com](mailto:teresaleeau@gmail.com) or [canossian.alumnae@gmail.com](mailto:canossian.alumnae@gmail.com). You can also visit the website [www.canossianalumnae.org](http://www.canossianalumnae.org).



### Opt to receive soft copies of the PSA Newsletter?

To help save paper and administrative costs, we encourage members with email access to opt for receiving electronic versions of the PSA newsletter instead. Please email the Membership Secretary at [stmaryspsa@gmail.com](mailto:stmaryspsa@gmail.com) if you'd like to help us out and opt not to receive the mailed copy. Thank you in advance.

## Introducing the "Loveweavers"

by Emily Chan (Class of 2006)

*"Weaving" is always fascinating - how magical it is to create new things from combining totally different materials. We St. Marians are now combining hope and passion, turning them to yarns and threads to weave love .....*

In June 2006, two groups of youngsters met - one being a group of deprived children in Guangxi, the other being a group of St. Marians. These girls all embraced a heart yearning to serve, and that was why they chose to go to these abjectly poor rural suburbs to teach after their Exam.



*A different summer activity - teaching deprived children in rural China.*



*Loveweavers with a family in Guangxi.*

This was not a sight-seeing tour. They saw no Disneyland, shopping malls or amusement parks. They only saw children - deprived children longing to go to school but were disappointed every time they asked their parents for a chance. They did not go to school, not because they did not want to, but because they could not. Their parents simply could not make ends meet. And their parents just could not do anything when confronted with their children's innocent questioning eyes.

The girls were moved. They were determined to do something to answer these children's questions. Today, the children are still asking, they are just asking for a chance. Help us to help them.

*Loveweaver is a student group formed by St. Marians who wish to raise the awareness of other girls towards the underprivileged children in the Mainland, and to raise money to help these children enjoy quality education through exhibition and fund-raising activities.*

*For further information about Loveweaver, please contact Sr. Veronica at [veronicafok@smcc-canossian.org](mailto:veronicafok@smcc-canossian.org) or Emily Chan at [s011601@smcc-canossian.org](mailto:s011601@smcc-canossian.org).*

### **Notice of the 2007 Annual General Meeting of St. Mary's Past Students' Association**

**Date** : 17 March 2007 (Saturday)  
**Time** : 6:30 pm  
**Venue** : World Trade Centre Club  
38/F, World Trade Centre, 280 Gloucester Road, Causeway Bay, Hong Kong

#### **Agenda**

- 1. Adoption of the Minutes of the 2006 Annual General Meeting held on 25 March 2006**
- 2. Chairman's Report**
- 3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year**
- 4. Election of the Executive Committee**
- 5. Any Other Business**

**Note: Proxy forms can be downloaded from [www.stmaryspsa.org](http://www.stmaryspsa.org).**



**(B) Gift Sponsorship** Please  where appropriate.

I would also like to donate a gift/some gifts for lucky draw and/or table prizes.

Item: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_ pieces

Item: \_\_\_\_\_ X \_\_\_\_\_ pieces

1. Please reply before 5 March 2007 to allow time for necessary arrangements.
2. Kindly contact Mrs Karen Lui on (852) 2724 2771 to arrange for collection.

**(C) General Donation** Please  where appropriate.

I would like to make a separate donation in support of the St. Mary's Canossian College Development Fund. Enclosed is a cheque of \_\_\_\_\_.

Please tick here if a receipt for tax deduction purpose is required.

Name to be put on the receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for sending receipt:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please make cheque crossed and payable to **“St. Mary's Canossian College”**.
2. Please specify at the back of the cheque that it is a donation for the “SMCC Development Fund”.

I would like to make a separate donation in support of the Canossian Chapel Renovation Fund that will help restore the 100 year-old Canossian Chapel on Caine Road. Enclosed is a cheque of \_\_\_\_\_.

Please tick here if a receipt for tax deduction purpose is required.

Name to be put on the receipt: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheque number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for sending receipt:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. Please make cheque crossed and payable to **“Canossian Missions”**.
2. Please specify at the back of the cheque that it is a donation for the “Canossian Chapel Renovation Fund”.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Kindly return this reply form together with your cheque(s) to  
**St Mary's Past Students' Association, 162 Austin Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon**