



St. Mary's Past Students' Association

NEWSLETTER ♦ February 2013

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Message from our Patron Ms. Catherine Wong, Principal of SMCC

Dear Alumnae,

Coming up in April, the school is going to put up five shows of Drama performance titled 'Persephone'. You can find further details in this issue of the newsletter or on the school webpage and hope that you have the time to come and join us. Benefits of Drama to students are many (too many!!!) -- from English proficiency to enhancing skills in lighting and sound to art to management to self-confidence... The list is too long to exhaust. Students who are lucky enough to be given a part gain so much out of the experience. I suppose many of you who had taken part in drama before would recognize its significance in students' aesthetic and all-round development!

Musical performance is another of our main endeavour in students' aesthetic development. We have Western and Chinese Orchestras, Concert Band, Choirs etc., and around 40% of the school population are active members of the Music Club. They practise diligently, take part in various competitions, showcase their talents in the School Concert, and are often invited to perform by outside organizations. Moreover, over 1,000 students take part in the Talent Quest every year, which is one of St. Marians' most favourite school programmes!

We also make an effort to provide more diversified programmes. Two important areas which we have picked up are Dance and Fashion Shows. Those of you who have had the chance to watch the Dance team perform would certainly marvel at their attractive, elegant moves and coordination. As for the Fashion Show, we have made it a yearly occurrence for Visual Art students to apply what they have learnt. Adjudicators and teachers have always been pleased with their high standard!



Chinese Orchestra at Legislative Council Complex Open Day



Winners of Fashion Show 2012

A happy and healthy year of the Snake to you all! God bless everyone!

Ms Catherine Wong

Message from our Patron Ms. Maria Cheung, Principal of SMCS

Dear St. Marians,

Happy New Year, the Lunar Year of the Snake!

I wish you success, health and blessings from our heavenly Father. In the New Testament, we can find Jesus referring the snake to be wise, sharp and shrewd. "Be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves" (Matthew 10:16), Jesus tells us. In dealing with worldly matters, we have to be intelligent, well informed and sharp, but in the eyes of our heavenly Father, we have to be simple like a child.

As you can see and may have experienced to a certain extent, technology has been making constant changes in our life style. This makes life more demanding, complicated and challenging. In school education, we have various programmes and activities to build up students' capability and positive attitude. Nevertheless, it is hard to implement our plan as our efforts are constantly being weakened by distractions around us. Today, there is an increasing demand for ethical responsibility from every individual. Our personality and our moral values are what make us different from others.

Our school's moral value comes from St. Magdalene of Canossa. "Above all, make Jesus known and loved," was her burning desire. Therefore, religious education plays a key role in our school. We teach the subject and at the same time, the teachers aim to deliver the Catholic faith, which creates a solid foundation for the big project of "Formation of the heart". When we remain in Jesus Christ and are guided by His truth, He will transform us to make the right choices to tackle problems in our daily life. We will acquire inner wisdom and simplicity of the heart in a complicated society.



*Enjoying a game with young
Catholic leaders in a spiritual retreat*



*Ms Cheung giving introduction
at one of the IMC training
sessions for senior teachers*

For over a year, the school sponsoring body, as well as the school management committee, has been working hard in setting up the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), marking a new era in the history of the school. We have submitted the constitution to the Education Bureau and in the meantime, training workshops have been organized for different groups. In the future, there will be managers from different groups to make decisions for the development of the school. Be they teachers, parents or alumni (like your good selves, more on this in a separate section in this newsletter), each group has the responsibility to have a thorough understanding of the Canossian mission and vision in order to meet the requirements of an education system that is unique of St. Mary's.

Your participation and support is crucial to help us achieve our Foundress' vision and mission.

Sincerely,
Ms Maria Cheung

*With lucky draw winners
at Christmas celebration*



Special Feature - From Italy with Love - Sister Severina Sattin

Many of us might have visited Verona and perhaps even visited some monuments of St Magdalene of Canossa (foundress of the Canossian Daughters and Sons of Charity) there. Yet how many met sisters who used to teach at St Mary's back in their homes in Italy? Our alumna Sabina Ho did. Here follows a sentimental record of her recent trip to Treviso in northern Italy, meeting Sr Severina Sattin. The map on the right would give you some idea of where exactly Treviso is.



How best to show someone that he/she is always in your mind? Well, simply say so - *in person*. Many of us who were at St. Mary's in the 70s may remember Sr Severina and her amicable character. I recently visited her in Italy and found her as loving and lively as ever. She asked me to say "hello" on her behalf to all Sisters, teachers and students at St. Mary's new and old.

Sr Severina was one of the most cheerful nuns in St. Mary's. Generous with her happy giggles, she was a breath of fresh air among other more serious faces. She was an excellent English teacher who liked to sing, collected stamps and infected us immensely with her friendliness and kindness. But don't get carried away. She could be quite strict too if she caught us misbehaving.



Sr Severina (3rd row; 3rd from right) was the Form 1 class mistress of Sabina (front row; 2nd from right)



Main building of Istituto Canossiano

I left St. Mary's for Canada after junior high. Unfortunately, by the time I returned after college, Sr Severina had already left Hong Kong. I had a hard time resuming contact with her until one day, Sr Rosangela (an ex-Principal) pulled a *postal* address from her hat. I sent a letter around mid-2011 but did not get any reply till December. Sr Severina had moved several times but my letter was in good hands (or God's hands?) that helped it trace her footsteps to the Istituto Canossiano in Treviso (<http://www.canossiane-treviso.it>) - her latest base. A visit was decided immediately.

The convent is on the outskirts of Treviso, 30 minutes from Venice. My husband, Michael, and I arrived there one afternoon last November. We thought we made a mistake as the building and its surroundings looked more like a luxurious hotel than a convent. It also housed a primary school, a secondary school and a vocational training centre. The Sisters at the reception were

expecting us and welcomed us to a nearby sitting room. The anxious wait quickly turned into a warm embrace when "Mother" Severina, accompanied by Mother Mirella - the Mother Superior, appeared at the door (they still use "Mother" as St. Mary's did in the 60s). We were finally reunited, as it were, just like in the movies.

Sr Severina has not changed much. At 80 and after a recent heart surgery, there were still those jolly sparkles in her eyes. We exchanged news about each other and she translated for Mother Superior and us. Despite infrequent use of English at the convent, her days at the University of London ensured that she could still master it. We chatted about the old days and she could still recount vividly an incident when the ceiling plaster of a classroom suddenly fell during one of her classes; her voice, gestures and excitement were the same as before. She was visibly moved when I told her she was my and others' most favourite teacher.



The reunion

The St. Mary's Photo Book (published in 2005) was one of my gifts to Sr Severina. Overjoyed, she instantly flipped through the pages of the thick book and shared pictures and stories with Mother Superior. She joked that the album brought back good old memories and made her feel young again - it was "Yesterday Once More". Mother Superior was so impressed that she declared it would be placed in the convent's museum as a testimony to the nuns' great work overseas. Thus, we St. Marians will leave our mark in Italy, from where our pioneering Sisters first set sail 150 long years ago!

The Sisters escorted us on a tour of their immaculately run convent. We took the opportunity to pray together in the chapel, our first in decades. We met several other nuns, some in their 90s. One was the Cantonese speaking Sr Gina (羅修女) who taught at St. Francis Canossian College for a long while. Others had been to Macau, Singapore, Africa, Australia and other parts of the world - being real globe-trotters then. They now live happily together (being cared for by nurses and helpers), praying and attending masses beamed from the Vatican.

The school section was also well-managed and equipped with modern facilities. We were surprised to find coffee vending machines and were told they always attracted long queues of students in the morning. I could not have imagined the nuns are so accommodating these days. In our days, the closest we could fancy was, umm, a Vitasoy. Mother Superior held not only the keys to the convent but also those to the vending machines (free of charge of course). She treated us with a couple of cappuccinos which were of hotel quality.

Our meeting ended on an upbeat note and we promised to visit again. Although most nuns there did not speak English, they were very happy to see us and treated us like locals. We tried our utmost to make of their Italian! On that humble occasion, it felt as if I represented the product of their life-long hard work and, with Michael, was evidence that marriage could still last nowadays. Hallelujah! If my visit can make them feel they are always remembered, it will certainly be the best achievement of this trip. To Sis with Love!

Sabina Ho
(sabinaho@gmail.com)



School News - Incorporated Management Committee Election of Alumni Manager

What is the Incorporated Management Committee?

The Government has introduced a new School-based management system for all aided schools. Under this system, the school's management will have greater autonomy and flexibility in managing its operations and resources, and in planning for the school's development. An integral part of this system is the establishment of an Incorporated Management Committee ("IMC"), which is a statutory governance and decision-making body with the participation of all stakeholders. The legal framework for the establishment and modus operandi of the IMC is set out in the Education Ordinance. Both SMCC and SMCS will have to set up their respective IMCs by November 2013.

Composition of the IMC

The IMC will comprise the school principal/headmistress (who will be the ex-officio manager), not more than seven managers nominated by the school sponsoring body (in our case the Canossian Daughters of Charity), one teacher manager, one parent manager, one alumni manager and one independent manager.

Term of the IMC

The term of the IMC will be two years, with the first one from September 2013 to August 2015.

Duties of the IMC

The IMC will be responsible for managing the school in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Education Ordinance and other legislation, as well as codes, instructions and guidelines set down by the Education Bureau and the Canossian Daughters of Charity.

More specifically, the IMC will be responsible for formulating the education policies of the school in accordance with the mission and vision of the Canossian Daughters of Charity, planning and managing the financial and human resources of the school, ensuring that the mission of the school is carried out and that the education of students is promoted in a proper manner, planning for the development and improvements of the school, as well as hiring teaching and non-teaching staff of the school and determining their conditions of service.

Accountability

The IMC will be accountable to the Canossian Daughters of Charity, the Education Bureau and the public for its work.

The Alumni Manager

All alumni of SMCC will be eligible to become the Alumni Manager for SMCC, and all alumni of SMCS will be eligible to become the Alumni Manager for SMCS. The PSA will arrange for the election of the Alumni Managers for both schools.

Election

The first election of the Alumni Managers for both SMCC and SMCS will take place in October 2013. The Regulations for the Election and relevant amendments to the PSA Constitution have been uploaded to the PSA website www.stmaryspsa.org for reference.

School News - Persephone



SCHOOL DRAMA - "PERSEPHONE"



Drama Week 2013 will run from 15 April (Mon) to 20 April (Sat) (rest day on 17 April (Wed)). The story this year, "Persephone", is loosely based on the legend of Persephone, telling the story of the four seasons. It is written and directed by Mr Geoff Oliver and co-directed by Ms Eudora Lee, with music composed by students.



The **Gala Night** will take place on 19 April (Fri). Ticket prices include \$100*, \$180*, \$250 and \$500. Further information is available from Ms Queenie Cheng (General Office) at 2724 2771.

** prices not available on 19 and 20 April.*

Thank You Note from Honeyville Canossian Retreat House

The Open House and the mini bazaar at the Honeyville Canossian Retreat House were held successfully on 11 November 2012. A total of \$164,104.10 has been raised through the events, enabling the procurement of a "Mobile Stair Climber" for wheel-chair users and the modification of a toilet for use by the handicapped. The balance will be used for other urgent or improvement works at the Retreat House. The Administrator, Sr Anna Maria Kwan, would like to express her gratitude to all alumnae who have contributed.

Class Reunion News

The **Class of 1962** celebrated their 50th anniversary in November 2012 in Hong Kong. Over 35 classmates from the English section gathered from different parts of the world for a range of activities, including meals, visits and tours to Hong Kong and Macau. On 3 November, they visited Sr Ida in the morning and reunited on campus in the afternoon, during which souvenirs were presented to the school. Separately, more than 30 classmates from the Chinese section also reunited in Hong Kong for celebration. They had a campus visit in the afternoon of 29 November, followed by a dinner where they shared fond memories of their school days. The group also made a donation to the SMCC Development Fund. To reconnect, please contact Mrs Agnes Leung at <agnesleung22@yahoo.com> (English section) or Yvonne Yiu at <ysoysoyiu@gmail.com> (Chinese section).



*Class of 1962 (English section)
at their reunion.*



*A big hello from Class of 1962
(Chinese section).*

The **Class of 1963** is planning their Golden Jubilee Celebrations of their 50th Class Anniversary in Hong Kong and China, beginning on **4 November 2013**. The first week will include dinners, day excursions and a school visit in Hong Kong to be followed by a Yangtse River Cruise the following week. Family and friends are welcome. To register, please contact Lucy Chan Lau at 93299110 or <lucysmlau@gmail.com>.

Organising a reunion for your class? Let our Membership Secretary know and we can include your news on the newsletter and the website. Email to membershipsec@stmaryspsa.org.

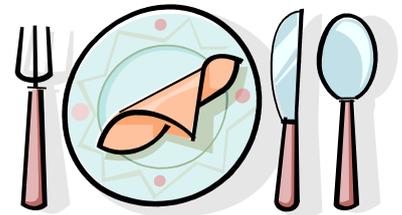
2013 SMPSA Annual General Meeting & Alumnae Dinner



Approval of the regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committees of SMCC and SMCS and the formation of the PSA Executive Committee 2013-15 would be the two major agenda items for the 2013 PSA AGM, which will be held at **5:30pm** on 16 March 2013 (Sat).

What's next after the AGM? The 2013 SMPSA Alumnae Dinner awaits you! It would be a great opportunity for St. Marians to catch up and have some crazy fun! Needless to say, lucky draw, games, gifts and souvenirs will be included!

Date : 16 March 2013 (Sat)
Time : 7 pm
Venue : World Trade Centre Club
38/F, World Trade Centre, 280 Gloucester Road,
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
Menu : Chinese style set dinner
Price : HK\$450 per person



LAST CHANCE TO BOOK YOUR SEATS!

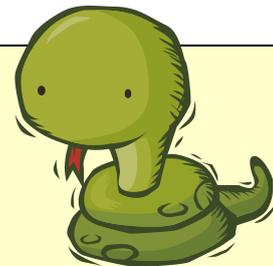
To those who have already booked your seats, thank you!

If you still haven't done so, this is your last chance!

Download the Reply Form from www.stmaryspsa.org now and send it back to us ASAP!

We look forward to seeing you at the dinner!

Thank you for your continuous support
to the PSA. The ExCo wishes you and
your family a Happy Year of the Snake!



Notice of the 2013 Annual General Meeting of St. Mary's Past Students' Association

Date : 16 March 2013 (Saturday)
Time : 5:30 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 2012 Annual General Meeting held on 17 March 2012
2. Chairman's Report
3. Adoption of the Financial Report for the last financial year ending 31 August 2012
4. Adoption of the Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian College
5. Adoption of the Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian School
6. Adoption of the revised St. Mary's Past Students' Association Constitution with respect to Items 4 and 5 above
7. Election of Executive Committee 2013-2015
8. Any Other Business

Note: The following documents can be downloaded from www.stmaryspsa.org :

- *Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian College*
- *Regulations for the Election of the Alumni Manager for the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) of St. Mary's Canossian School*
- *Revised St. Mary's Past Students' Association Constitution*
- *Executive Committee Nomination Form*
- *Meeting Proxy Form*

All members are welcome.



In Loving Remembrance.....

Teresa Houghton (née Wan), a student at St Mary's in the 1950s, returned to God on
10 August 2012 in London, the United Kingdom, at the age of 73.

~ *Eternal rest grant unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her.
May she rest in peace. Amen* ~