

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

# CNTINUUM



Fall 2009

**INSIDE:  
THE YOUNG  
MONKS OF  
CISTERCIAN**

## Going **GREEN**

**Alumni are doing  
their part in a  
wide variety  
of fields**

**Paul Tomaso '80 stands amidst  
mountains of compost at Living  
Earth Technology, the largest  
recycler of green materials in Texas.**







# Looking to the future



**50<sup>th</sup>**  
anniversary

CAMPAIN  
The final phase

Contact Erin Hart 469-499-5406 or ehart@cistercian.org.



## CISTERCIAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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Rev. Bernard Marton  
*Assistant Headmaster*

Greg Novinski '82  
*Head of Upper School*

Fr. Paul McCormick  
*Head of Middle School*

Robert J. Haaser  
*Director of Admissions*

Janet Bucher-Long  
*College Counselor*

Erin Hart  
*Director of Development  
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Dan Lee  
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*President, Cistercian  
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Jere W. Thompson, Jr. '74

### The CONTINUUM

David Stewart '74  
*Editor & Art Director*

Tom B. Pruitt  
*Copy Editor*

Erin Hart  
*Assistant Copy Editor*

Jim Reisch  
*Photography Editor*

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3660 Cistercian Road  
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469-499-5400

[www.cistercian.org](http://www.cistercian.org)

## Ordinations and transformations

*The Cistercian of the future is beginning to emerge before our eyes*

This edition of *The Continuum* comes to you bearing news of wonderful transformations.

We are indescribably proud of the transformation of Br. Joseph Van House. On August 15, he was ordained Father Joseph. Just over eight days later, he began overseeing the transformation of First Formers into the Class of 2017.



**Letter from  
the headmaster**

*Fr. Peter Verhalen '73*

Please read Dr. Pruitt's "The Young Monks of Cistercian," to appreciate the outstanding men who will follow Fr. Joseph and who will begin to carry Cistercian forward in familiar — and yet entirely new — ways.

Fr. Joseph's new beginning this year coincides with the transformation of the Middle School. We hope that the dramatically more efficient building and grounds will influence Cistercian students to appreciate beauty in light of what's

appropriate for the environment and its limited resources.

We owe our thanks to the many generous donors to the 50th Anniversary Campaign who made this project possible.

**Warren Andres '77** of Andres Construction, **Gary Cunningham '72** and Lonnie Burns of Cunningham Architects, and **David Hocker '96** of Hocker Landscape Design teamed up to complete this complicated project on a very tight summer schedule.

Our lead feature highlights alumni — including Andres, Cunningham, and Hocker — who use their talents to transform the way we consume resources and impact our environment.

I like to think that the vocation of the brothers, and their perseverance through to ordination, provides the perspective from which we should judge our own transformations.

Are we responding to God's call to serve him by serving others? Let us all strive to hear His Voice and respond to it.

### volume 36, number 2

### in this issue



### Going green

8

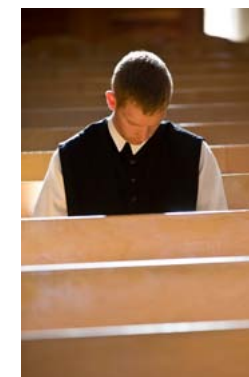
Alumni are doing their part in a variety of fields. Some are driven by a passion for the environment. Others are motivated to save money. Both camps agree that there is no turning back now.

*By David Stewart*

### departments

School News.....4-7  
Sports.....18-19  
Class Notes.....20-22  
Afterthoughts *by Smokey Briggs '84* ..23  
On Prayer *by Fr. Roch Kereszty* .....24

Cover photography:  
Jim Reisch



### The young monks of Cistercian

14

A visit with the contingent of impressive young men who will lead the school towards its 100th anniversary in 2062.

*By Tom Pruitt*

Cistercian Preparatory School was founded with the aim of preparing talented boys for the colleges of their choice by challenging their minds with excellent academic programs, molding their character through the values of Catholic education, and offering them guidance with both understanding and discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission and education policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, and other activities.





Photo by Jim Reisch  
Michael Lawson '09

### Lawson lands UNC's Morehead Scholarship

Michael Lawson '09 is attending the University of North Carolina thanks to the Morehead-Cain Scholarship.

The four-year program includes all college-related expenses, a laptop computer, plus summer leadership programs.

Cistercian also was designated as a nominating institution for future Morehead recipients.

Many others earned significant monies including Addison White '09 (Chancellor's Scholarship at TCU), Will Garnett '09 (Terry Scholarship at Texas A&M), Nick Echevarria '09 (National Hispanic Scholar at Arizona State), and TJ Alcalá '09 (National Merit Scholar at Fordham). More scholarship news on p. 6.

### Practical, grounded decisions

## Values drive '09 college selections

"This year's college list is wonderfully diverse," said Janet Bucher-Long, Cistercian's college counselor, "and their choices illustrate the kind of wholesome values that motivated them."

Those values led eleven to select local colleges, up from five last year.

"Many of the boys looked at SMU, UTD, and TCU, and recognized that these schools offered outstanding programs and they will offer great ad-



Photo by Jim Reisch  
**ON THE HILLTOP** Five members of the Class of 2009 are attending SMU this fall (l-r): David Baillargeon '09, Giancarlo Carleo '09, Holden Godat '09, Daniel Vallero '09, and Mitch Miller '09.

vantages after they graduate," noted Bucher-Long.

Acceptances at highly selective institutions did not distract members of the class from choosing programs better suited to their values and goals.

"You could say my college decision had been made for me my entire life," reflected Matthias Andrews '09 on his selection of the University of

Dallas over the University of Chicago.

"I am the oldest son of UD students," Andrews noted. "They taught me the value of a good Catholic education."

So, even though the University of Chicago offered an equally lucrative scholarship, Andrews decided on UD, where he will live on campus.

"Family is a big priority for me," he acknowledged, "so staying close is a huge blessing, especially with another sibling (number 10) due to arrive at the end of September."

As with Andrews, family played a key role for Pablo Muldoon '09, Zach Buswold '09, and Adam Sherburne '09.

Paul Hedrick '09 turned down the Ivies for Duke's engineering program.

"These were not self-centered selections," said Bucher-Long.

Fifty-three percent accepted scholarships. Some are listed in the left-hand column.

"The boys worked hard researching and writing essays for those scholarships," said Bucher-Long.

"Cistercian boys have resumes that a lot of kids can't match," she emphasized. "They can play three sports, edit the yearbook, and perform community service."

"These opportunities allow them to become the kind of leaders colleges are seeking."

### COLLEGE SELECTIONS

- |                          |                              |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Arizona State University | Southern Methodist (5)       |
| Auburn University        | Stanford University          |
| Austin College           | Texas A&M University (2)     |
| Boston College           | Texas Christian (2)          |
| Chapman University       | Trinity University           |
| Davidson                 | US Naval Academy             |
| Duke                     | Univ. of Alabama             |
| Fordham                  | Univ. of Dallas              |
| Franklin College*        | Univ. of Pennsylvania (2)    |
| Harvard                  | UT, Austin                   |
| Johns Hopkins            | UT, Dallas (3)               |
| Loyola Marymount         | University of Virginia       |
| NOLS**                   | Vanderbilt                   |
| N. Carolina, Chapel Hill | Wake Forest                  |
| Notre Dame (2)           | Washington Univ. (St. Louis) |
| Princeton                | Wheaton College              |
| Rhodes College           |                              |

\* Switzerland  
\*\* Gap year at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS)

## Middle School renovations



BEFORE

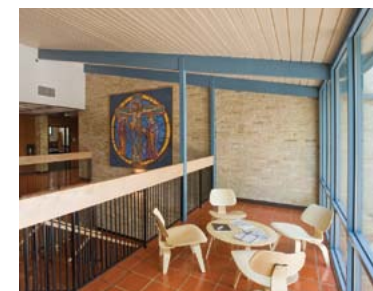


AFTER

The Middle School breezeway area now also serves as the entrance to the headmaster's office.



Looking down the Form I hallway towards the Upper School.



The Middle School classrooms feature entirely new walls, white boards, desks, computers and projector screens. In the common areas, the well-worn stairwell was freshened and an indoor sitting area was created from the area that was formerly a balcony.

## Giving record set Campaign moves into final stretch

The 50th Anniversary Campaign, which became public just two years ago, has already dazzled the community with its achievements.

On May 31, the campaign surpassed the \$10 million mark on the way to the eventual goal of \$15 million by June 1, 2012.

The May surge was prompted by an anonymous donor who offered \$250,000 in matching funds for every dollar donated before the end of the school year.

"We are very grateful to the many donors who stepped up to enable the campaign to capture the full amount," said Erin Hart, Cistercian's new director of development (see story on page 6).

"We are ecstatic to have raised so much money for the school," remarked Joel Fontenot, a member of the 50th Anniversary Campaign steering committee.

"The \$10 million in cash and pledges exceeds the total raised by any campaign in Cistercian's history."

"The funds collected have increased the endowment by over \$1 million," Fontenot added, "and enabled Cistercian to spend nearly \$6 million renovating the Upper and Middle Schools."

"Outstanding pledges will ensure the repayment of the debt from the land purchased to protect Cistercian's environment."

"Still," acknowledged Fontenot, "we are only two-thirds of the way there."

The final stretch of the campaign will seek to raise an additional \$5 million.

"The last phase will be crucial in providing the school with the flexibility to meet future challenges," he emphasized.

"The funding of both the student services building and the school's endowment are essential as Cistercian moves into its second 50 years."

"The new building will completely change the face of the campus," he added, "and make a very visible and definitive statement about the community's wish to carry on the tradition of the first 50 years."



50<sup>th</sup> anniversary  
CAMPAIGN



**Mitch Miller wins the Hillary Award**

**M i t c h Miller '09** was awarded the Hillary Award at this year's Athletic Banquet.

Miller stood out on the football field and basketball court for his many talents, hustle, and attitude. He is attending SMU as a Hunt Leadership Scholar.

**Class of '09 notes**

In appreciation of Cistercian's renovated facilities, **Trevor Wylie '09** organized the Facilities Council to install water-wise native plants and began work on a cross country trail and Stations of the Cross on the new eastern acres ... **James Levitt '09** helped Cistercian fare very well once again during the schedule of math contests, including second at Rice and the McNabb ... **TJ Alcalá**



'09, **Paul DiFiore '09**, and **Joe O'Connell '09** (above) and their band, Studs Terkel and the Muckrakers (STAMS), played gigs and recorded over the summer.



**HAPPY DAYS** Greg McGuire '09 will be joined at UTD by classmates Marcus Burnside '09 and Nick Rotundo '09.

**UTD Scholarship Award**

**McGuire wins McDermott**

**Greg McGuire '09** won a Eugene McDermott Scholarship to attend the University of Texas at Dallas. The scholarship is named for one of the founders of Texas Instruments (and a cofounder of UTD).

As a McDermott Scholar, he will have educational expenses — including tuition and fees, and stipends for living expenses, travel and books — covered for the next four years.

McGuire, an Eagle Scout, accomplished singer, math and French whiz, plans to study arts and technology, computer science and electrical engineering, and hopes to become a civil engineer and architect.

**Two important additions to Cistercian**

**New talent and experience**

TCU graduate **André Bruce** comes to Cistercian from Samford University (Birmingham, Alabama) where he served as an assistant football coach. He is teaching Health (IV) and serving as defensive coordinator of the varsity football team.

"I have always heard wonderful things about Coach Steve McCarthy, Dan Lee, and Cistercian," said Bruce, who coached the 2003 season at Fort Worth Country Day. He also has coached at TCU, Emporia State University, and Rice University.

Bruce started at defensive back for TCU, where he graduated in 1999. He won both the Abe Martin Award and the Iron Frog Award.

"I would like to make a marked impact in the lives of the young boys of our school," he said.

**Erin Hart** was hired as director of development in March and has already met many of those involved in the community.

Hart's work in development has included stints at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, the College of Fine and Applied Arts at The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Parkland Foundation.

"I am amazed at the Cistercian community's dedication and passion for the School and Abbey," said the Highland Park graduate who went on to Washington & Lee University.

"I became familiar with Cistercian in high school through John Henrich '93 and Robert Mead '93 at W&L," she said.



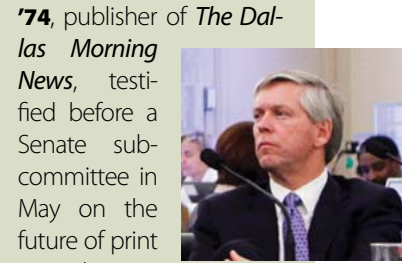
Hart and her husband Jason have a one-year-old son named Harrison.

**NEW ON CAMPUS**  
**André Bruce and Erin Hart**

Photo by Jim Reisch

**Alumni notes**

**James M. Moroney '74**, publisher of *The Dallas Morning News*, testified before a Senate subcommittee in May on the future of print journalism in America ... **Joker One**, by **Donovan Campbell III '97** made *The New York Times* best-seller list. The book describes Campbell's experiences in Ramadi, Iraq ... Some alumni of Cistercian's first video class were in town working on a film and called their former teacher **Jim Reisch** to play an eighties arms dealer. That's writer/actor **Clayton Long '00** in front with (l-r) Reisch, writer **Brian Madole '00**, and director **Tom Campbell '00**.



TCU graduate **André Bruce** comes to Cistercian from Samford University (Birmingham, Alabama) where he served as an assistant football coach. He is teaching Health (IV) and serving as defensive coordinator of the varsity football team.



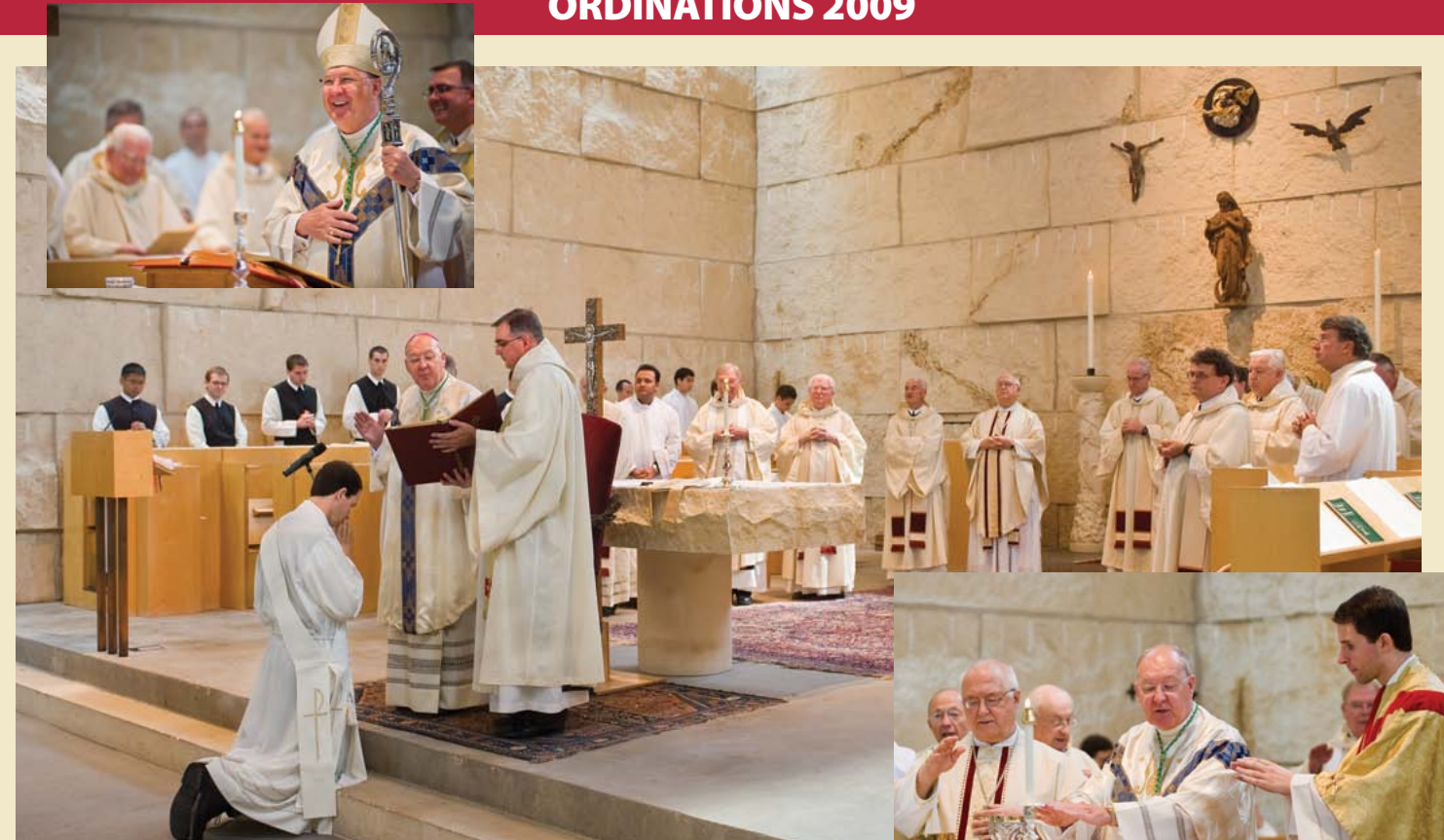
**Faculty notes**

**Fr. Matthew Kovacs** turned 80 in February ... **Bob Haaser** received a Hawks' football jersey with #40 on the front and #60 on the back to celebrate his 40th year at Cistercian and his 60th birthday.



Photo by Jim Reisch

**ORDINATIONS 2009**



**A transformative August**  
*Ordinations cheer Cistercian community*

"We choose **Joseph Van House**, our brother, for the Order of the Priesthood," bellowed **Bishop Kevin J. Farrell** of Dallas. The packed chapel responded, "Thanks be to God," and erupted into applause that filled the chapel for over a minute.

The applause — full of emotion, smiles, and excitement — briefly broke the solemnity of the ordination ceremonies on August 15.

"I do not like clapping in the church," reflected **Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy** afterwards. "Yet, I felt that the participants have hugged him, me, and all of us 'via applause.' It was an emotionally compelling, convincing moment."

The bishop referred to the priesthood as "transforming the heart and soul of the individual."

In addition, **Br. Philip Lastimosa '00** and **Br. Augustine Hoelke '00** were ordained as deacons by Bishop **Kevin W. Vann** of Fort Worth on August 30.

On August 20, **Br. Thomas Esposito**, **Br. Ignatius Preacher**, and **Br. Ambrose Strong** renewed their vows and **Br. Justin (Ryan) McNamara** received his new name, along with his white habit, and the white scapular of a Cistercian novice.

Just over a week after his ordination, Fr. Joseph began his duties as form master of Form I at the prep school (the Class of 2017).

"Fr. Joseph is inexperienced, enthusiastic, ready to learn, and exceptionally intelligent," commented Abbot Denis. "He understands the identity of the School, respects and loves Fr. Peter. We have every reason to expect him to succeed."



**NEW FAMILY** Members of the Class of 2017 and their parents congratulate their new form master, **Fr. Joseph**.



(From top left) Dallas Bishop Kevin Farrell enjoyed presiding over the joyous occasion. **Br. Joseph Van House** kneels before the bishop and his assistant, **Fr. Paul McCormick**. **Abbot Denis Farkasfalvy**, the bishop, and **Fr. Joseph** celebrate the Liturgy of the Eucharist. **Fr. Joseph** celebrating his First Mass the day following his ordination. Below: **Br. Philip Lastimosa '00**, Fort Worth Bishop **Kevin Vann**, and **Br. Augustine Hoelke '00**.







**LEGALLY GREEN**  
Justin Lannen '92 (left), an attorney with the EPA, and Brendan Lowrey '93, an environmental attorney with Thompson & Knight.

## Going GREEN

Whether they pursue ecological issues passionately or practically, these alumni believe there's no turning back.

*By David E. Stewart*

**"F**reezing stinking cold," remembered Brendan Lowrey '93 of the January night he worked on an emergency response team evaluating the environmental impact of a train derailment on the Arkansas River.

He and his colleagues had mobilized at 9 pm and arrived at the site in northeastern Oklahoma around 1 am. They worked until dawn.

This wasn't the kind of work Lowrey had envisioned when he majored in chemistry at the University of Dallas.

After graduating from UD, however, he was offered this job as environmental consultant with a contractor for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). "I don't even know how they got my resume," he mused.

But here he was on this chilling night, employing his knowledge as a chemist on the derailed train's potentially explosive combination of fertilizer and corn syrup.

"It quickly became evident that there was no danger," said Lowrey, "since the hundreds of gallons of fertilizer and corn syrup had dissolved into the millions of gallons of water in the middle of the

Arkansas River."

"But it was impressive how quickly the railroad companies were able to mobilize people and equipment to clean up the spill and to re-open their railroad line," Lowrey added.

"They had containment booms preventing the spill from migrating down river, to the extent they could," he said. "They addressed both the river and its banks to limit exposure."

In his work as an environmental consultant, Lowrey found small, rural oil and gas operators to be far less sophisticated when it came to environmental clean-ups.

"Many of them were uneducated about environmental regulations," he said, "and some didn't care."

Justin Lannen '92 didn't fall into an environment-related job after college like Lowrey. The former Hawk quarterback sought it out.

"At Boston College, I was drawn to environmental protection issues," Lannen explained.

Perhaps it evolved from a high school experience helping classmate Ivan Konnerman '92 set up a rudimentary recycling system at

Cistercian.

"An important part of those experiences was to work with like-minded individuals who had a passion for the environment," he reflected. "We felt part of something bigger than ourselves."

So after Boston College, Lannen began helping out at an Austin non-profit dedicated to protecting forests and wildlife in the state.

"One of the primary issues revolved around the state's dwindling water supply," he said.

"On a policy level, the debate was whether to prolong our water supply primarily through conservation or primarily through the construction of additional reservoirs."

The non-profit worked to persuade people that building reservoirs meant destroying thousands of acres of natural forests. They emphasized that the malevolent consequences on the rivers' ecological systems, especially wildlife, would be devastating.

"We found, however," Lannen observed, "that most people were more motivated by protecting landowners who did not want their land condemned than they were by protecting ecosystems."

Today, Lannen and Lowrey continue to be involved in environ-



# Changing the Texas landscape

Tomaso and Living Earth Technology nurture plants from the ground up

As a young homeowner and parent in the late eighties, Paul Tomaso '80 "just wanted my kids to be able to play in a yard without insecticides and fertilizers in it."

He started a compost pile, dug a vegetable garden, and began reading about organic gardening.

He soon recognized the need for compost and other organic gardening products in North Texas. So, in 1990, he and three partners started Dallas Organic Products.

Within a year, the operation joined forces with Living Earth Technology out of Houston.

Their compost became well known; soon it became a staple for landscapers.

"Customers come in and say, 'Well I've got this terrible black clay gumbo full of big fissures. What can I do?'" Tomaso said.

"They don't appreciate what a wonderful, nutrient-rich soil we have, but it needs to be amended with compost."

Living Earth introduced hardwood mulch to North Texas; it is heavier and doesn't float away after a rain like pine bark mulch.

Meanwhile, the organic gardening cult grew and evolved into a movement. Today, organizations like the Texas Department of Transportation specify that contractors incorporate compost into the soils on their projects.

By enriching the soil with compost and protecting it with mulch, Texans are conserving water (healthy soils absorb water more efficiently), and reducing the need for chemical fertilizers that contaminate water supplies. The healthier plants also encourage beneficial insects, lessening the need for chemical insecticides.

Today, Living Earth manufactures and distributes more mulch, compost and other landscaping materials than any outfit in Texas.

"At any one time, we have about 60,000 cubic yards of compost in process (imagine a football field filled 20 ft. high)," said Tomaso '80. "We turn that pile over three times a year."

The firm operates out of 16 locations in Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, and Pineland. But its products, including a variety of mulches, composts, blended soils, and soil amendments, can be found at hundreds of locations from nurseries to grocery stores (under a variety of brand names).

It's a large, capital-intensive business that requires large equipment and lots of trucks.

And they're still developing products, like a new, light-weight landscapers' mix designed for roof gardens.

They've also developed a bio-filter — composed of pine chips and pine bark and compost — that is being used to scrub the air emitted from waste-water treatment plants. Both the City of Dallas and Fort Worth wastewater facilities are using this product.

And Kiddie Cushion is a playground material that provides a soft surface for playgrounds. Living Earth developed it out of pine wood chips.

Living Earth operates by recycling waste materials — destined in most cases for a landfill — into valuable landscaping products. In fact, it is Texas' largest recycler of green material.

"It's nice to be in a business that gives back to the environment and protects it," Tomaso said.

"Adding compost to our soil is one of the best things we can do to save water, and we recycle tons of material that would end up in a landfill otherwise," he said.

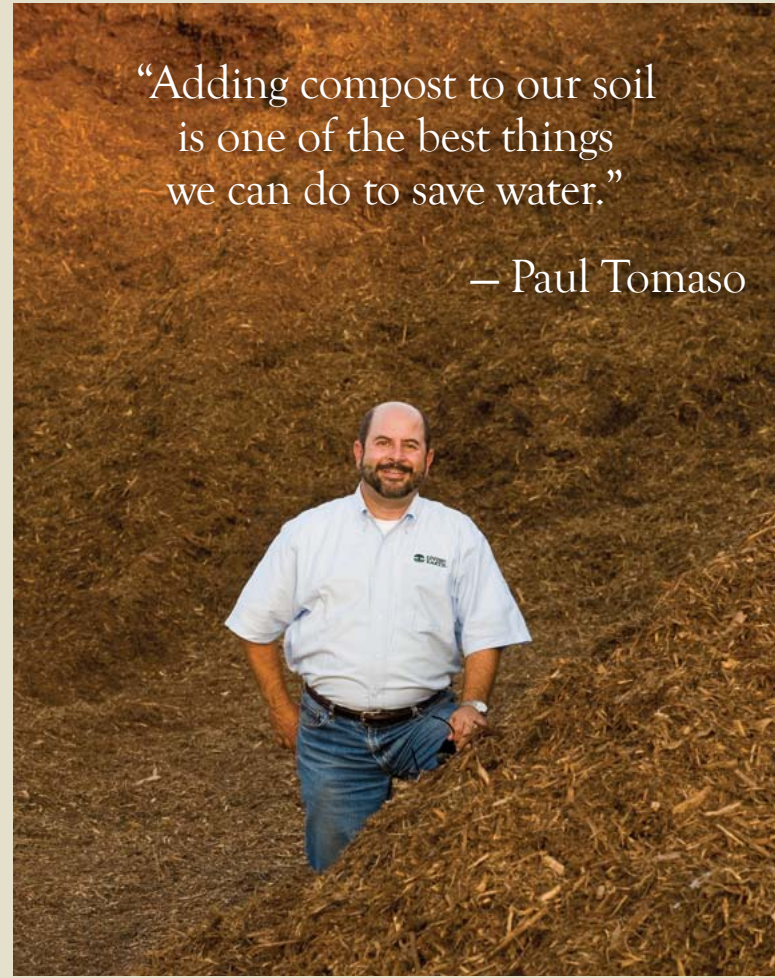
Daily, 500 to 600 cubic yards of stable bedding (i.e., hay, straw, and manure) are recycled from Lone Star Park, plus tons of lawn clippings and leaves, and truck-loads of Del Monte pineapple rinds and tomatoes that didn't make the grade.

Mulch is produced by recycling by-products from lumber mills, primarily bark. Brush and debris collected after storms is delivered to Living Earth locations and ground up for mulch also.

"Recycling is something that we don't do here in the US nearly to the degree that we should because we have so much space," Tomaso suggested.

"Landfills are not a scarce commodity now, but they will be."

"Water has been abundant," he added, "but it is becoming precious. We have to be good stewards of the environment and give nature a chance to work."



"Adding compost to our soil is one of the best things we can do to save water."

— Paul Tomaso

**BEFORE GREEN WAS COOL**  
Paul Tomaso '80 has been recycling green material into compost and mulch for 18 years at Living Earth Technology.

mental issues. Lannen serves as an attorney for the EPA where he enforces federal regulations in civil cases. Lowrey represents clients on environmental matters as an attorney for Thompson & Knight.

"I take personal satisfaction in many of the efforts that the EPA is undertaking to improve human health and the environment," Lannen said, his passion simmering just below the surface.

The EPA's primary goals include reducing greenhouse gases, improving air quality, managing chemical risks more effectively, accelerating clean-up of contaminated (or Brownfield) sites, and protecting the nation's water supply.

Lannen explains that while the EPA tries to encourage eco-friendly practices, "strong-arm enforcement is sometimes necessary to push entities into compliance with federal regulations."

The agency assesses fines, but also uses supplemental environmental projects (e.g., purchasing sensitive wetlands for preservation or contributing to local conservation programs).

"These monetary penalties are important as a deterrent," Lannen said.

Lowrey, on the other hand, works to prevent his clients from having to confront EPA lawyers like Lannen.

His work in Brownfield redevelopment — representing clients who want to purchase contaminated sites and put them to use — dovetails with the goals of EPA and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).

Both agencies now have programs and tools available so that Brownfield sites, which contribute to urban blight and lower property values, can serve more productive uses.

These programs, said Lowrey, align the clean-up to the use of the property, which reduces the cost and encourages development.

"In one case," Lowrey said, "I helped obtain a designation that provided adequate comfort for a developer to purchase a crime-ridden apartment complex, demolish it, and begin redeveloping the property into a stunning mixed-use development."

While the EPA and TCEQ have moved toward a more realistic policy on Brownfield sites, Lowrey sees industry moving toward a more environmentally conscious mind set.

"Fifty years ago companies just used the 'north forty' to dump their waste and no one asked any questions," he said.

Some companies are still uneducated or negligent about environmental concerns, he said, but many more have turned 180 degrees.

"Many are beginning to incorporate sustainable practices and policies at the highest level of their company, up to the officer and director level," he said. "And it is trickling down, since many large companies are requiring their subsidiaries and vendors to follow suit."

"They are looking at what is commonly called the 'triple bottom line,'" Lowrey noted. "In addition to economic factors, these companies consider social and environmental costs and benefits in the decision-making."

"Drastic efficiency opportunities exist throughout our economy," suggested Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) analyst Matt Bell '03. Drastic? RMI's mission statement dares "to envisage a world thriving, verdant, and secure, for all, for ever." Sounds a bit optimistic.

You call this a business? Well, actually they call it a "think-and-do tank." But when skepticism met cold, hard facts, the facts won.

RMI helped Texas Instruments to design the company's first high-efficiency, million-square-foot chip fabrication facility in Richardson near UTD in 2007.

The building uses 20 percent less energy per unit of production and, according to TI's web site, "was successfully built for an estimated 30 percent less in cost than a similar TI manufacturing plant constructed just six miles away only a few years earlier."

"This latter achievement," the TI web site reads, "increased the building's cost competitiveness among other semiconductor manufacturing facilities being built outside of the U.S."

Then there's the Empire State Building's recent transformation. RMI employed its integrated design process (called a "charrette") that brings together a range of experts and stakeholders, and applied



**VERDANT DREAMS**  
Matt Bell '03 at Rocky Mountain Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

some new technology to the project.

The team kept wringing energy savings out of the building until they cut the landmark's energy consumption by 38 percent per year.

When you consider that nearly 50 percent of our energy is consumed by existing structures, radical efficiencies like this one could really add up.

There's the new EDS new, most efficient datacenter in Wynyard, North East England. RMI's list goes on.

"Sometimes our ideas work," Bell admitted, "sometimes they don't. Either way, our consulting with businesses and governments helps us understand the dynamics of specific situations and refine our approaches for applications in the real world."

EDS did not implement all of RMI's design proposals, but they employed most of them. And they have a new catch phrase for their corporate philosophy: "Eco?" for economic and ecological success.

"I am primarily based on the utility side," said Bell, who is currently consulting with a utility company based in the southeastern US.

"They are so large that if we can help them reduce their energy use or carbon footprint even a small percentage, it will have huge ramifications."

RMI is focused on the built environment (existing structures



which consume approximately 40 percent of America's energy), transit/vehicle efficiency, and energy and resources.

"A lot of us at RMI are here because of the education we received," reflected the graduate of Carlton College, which has its own wind turbine. "In our own way, we are trying to give it back to the community by using our resources effectively so we can have a better future and improve our standard of living."

"This is no fad," said Warren Andres '77 of Andres Construction in Dallas. "Sustainable buildings are here to stay and are gaining momentum daily. Lenders are much more inclined to fund environmentally friendly projects."

Andres Construction's Warren Andres '77 earned his credentials as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional in 2005 and managed the construction of the first platinum-rated LEED-certified office building in North Texas in 2006.

Constructing a building according to LEED specifications requires using recycled materials, but also requires the construction company to recycle concrete and metal waste, and shred wood waste.

"Only trash can go to the landfill," said Andres.

"The variance between constructing a LEED-certified building and a conventional one has shrunk," he noted. "More options have become available, more materials are being recycled, so the cost is coming down."

Landscape design is changing more slowly.

"Until water prices go up," said David Hocker '96, who designed the new resource friendly landscape at Cistercian, "I think it will be hard for most people to make changes to their idea of a pleasing landscape."

"There are just mental hurdles to their rethinking how the yard should look and be used."

"The fact is that a water-friendly landscape will always look a bit messier than what we're accustomed to," Hocker emphasized, "but wildflowers and native grasses also will attract healthier birds and insects."

Architect Michael Patrick '81 of Patrick and Anderson Partner in Architecture, supports project teams seeking to certify their buildings as "sustainable designs" within the LEED rating systems.

"It has become a significant portion of our practice in just two years," said Patrick, who specializes in the design of churches and homes.

"In my field," said Brad Sissom '82, a freelance optical engineering consultant who lives in Boulder, "the two hot products are LED lights and solar."

Sissom is working on optics to modify LEDs so that they will fit a broader range of architectural specifications — from conference rooms to parking garages.

"LEDS are very efficient," he noted, "but they must be arrayed and lensed properly. This is an area of ongoing development."

Optics also have a role to play in lowering the cost of solar panels.

"We're working on ways to focus the light onto smaller areas so we can reduce the size and cost of the panel," Sissom said.

Optics experts also expect to replace the mechanical

systems used to tilt solar panels towards the sun with an optical scanner that will redirect the sunlight onto a stationary panel.

"Things were going gang-busters before the economy tanked," he said. "Now everybody's conserving cash until they really understand where the stimulus money is going."

Despite the economic downturn, society's hunger for computing power and server capacity continues to grow quickly. Everything from You Tube and Face Book to digital photos and digital music have spiked the demand for storage, servers, and the power needed to run and cool them.

That has helped Brooks Bailey '98, a business development engineer for Vishay Semiconductor in Austin, sell his energy-efficient products.

"These cutting-edge products are considerably more expensive

than conventional power semiconductors," he said.

"My customers recognize that the cost to run the machine over its lifetime is far greater than the cost of the machine," he said. "So the payback is quick."

Several Cistercians alumni report that they are studying ways to help conserve resources and improve the environment.

Andrés Ruzo '05, a native Nicaraguan with a B.B.A. in Finance (focus on Energy Finance) and a B.S. in Geology (focus on Geothermal Studies) from SMU, recently completed work on the SMU Geothermal Project. Currently, he is working on a geothermal map of Peru.

Michael Dorsey '99 is completing a three-year program at Stanford that will give him an MBA (entrepreneurship) and an M.S. in Environmental Resources, specifically in renewable energy

technology and engineering.

**T**he neat, civilized St. Augustine lawn that greeted students for decades as they climbed the steps to the school has vanished. Mass plantings of unfamiliar natives — including Turk's Cap, Inland Sea Oats, Sabal Minor, and Lindheimer Muhly — have replaced the familiar, green carpet.

The dramatic landscaping changes — designed by David Hocker '96 — boldly announce a resource-conscious direction that Cistercian students first caught wind of when waterless urinals were installed three years ago.

"Of course, exorbitant water bills have played a role in the changes we've made," acknowledged Fr. Peter Verhalen '73. "But we're also trying to model a simpler, more responsible lifestyle."

"I hope that — even indirectly — the boys will learn to appreciate the environment in which they find themselves, as opposed to ignoring it and creating an environment that is unnatural."

"In North Texas," he noted, "we are learning that it does not make sense to waste tons of water on grasses that do not grow naturally here."

Fr. Peter's awareness of the issue arose from a conference of headmasters held in Phoenix in 1999.

"I was struck by all of the golf courses in the midst of the desert," he said. "Along sidewalks, water misters helped to keep pedestrians cool. I began to think about the terrible waste of water."

But the landscaping changes — and subsequent savings in water and lawn maintenance — provide only a hint of all the other resource-saving modifications made during the renovations to the Upper and Middle Schools.

A highly efficient (and pleasantly quiet) air-conditioning system gives the school a lot of bang for its buck.

It creates further savings by allowing classroom temperatures to be controlled individually. The system also provides a healthier breathing environment by incorporating fresh air (25 percent of the total).

"We installed insulated windows and doors as well as insulation in the walls and roof," said Warren Andres of Andres Construction. Efficiencies were also achieved through better space planning.

"The Middle School now functions as a much larger building," said architect Gary Cunningham. "By gutting the structure, we were able to plan to make use of every square foot."

"The Cistercians have always appeared to me to be sustainable in their practice and in their doctrine at the abbey and at the school," added Cunningham who, among many other projects, has helped the school convert a lecture hall into a theater and a physical plant building into art and music rooms.

"I feel it does come back to living as we try to do in the monastery," said Fr. Peter, "that is, a relatively simple life."

These recent changes seem to have aligned the school's resource usage with its simple, consistent philosophies in other areas, like its simple lunch program, no-frills curriculum, limited extra-curricular activities, and straight-forward sports program.

"The whole idea of sustainability is kind of holistic after all," said Cunningham.

"Just as we teach our students to appreciate the truth of an academic subject or the value of each individual," Fr. Peter added, "I hope we also can teach them to connect with what's real and natural around them."

davidxstewart@gmail.com



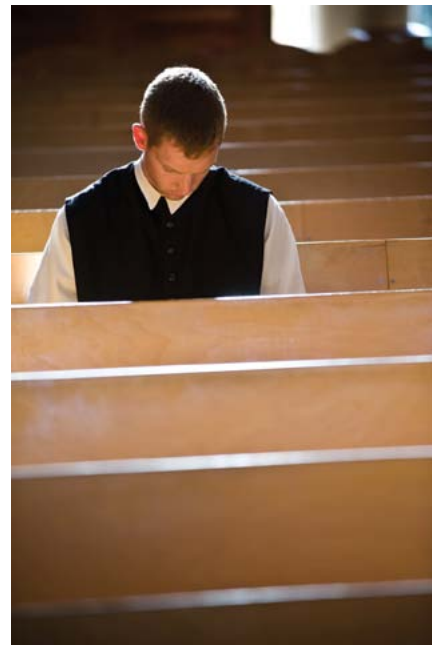
The landscaping changes provide only a hint of all the other resource-saving modifications made during the renovations to the school.



▲ **THE NEW ST. AUGUSTINE** Inland Sea Oats have replaced St. Augustine at the front of the school. The native grass will spread over time and will require little water and virtually no maintenance.

◀ **GREEN TEAM** (top row, l-r) Fr. Peter Verhalen '73, Warren Andres '77, Gary Cunningham '72, and (crouching) David Hocker '96.





# The young monks of Cistercian

*A visit with the impressive young monks who will lead the school toward its 100th anniversary in 2062.*

Story by Tom Pruit • Photography by Jim Reisch

Escorted by Br. Joseph Van House (now Fr. Joseph) and Br. Thomas Esposito into the monastery's classroom adjacent to the library, I sat down at the small wooden table (which usually serves as the teacher's desk) and faced a random disorder of chairs scattered just in front of me.

As more of the brothers began to arrive — from classes in Latin or Italian or from finishing up a chore in the monastery — they filled the unoccupied chairs, pushing them quite naturally into a more and more clearly defined semicircle, enlarging it as needed to include the later arrivals.

In so doing, they unconsciously, perhaps intuitively, put each other on equal footing. Whatever they might want to say was to be seen and heard and remain visible to all present — facial expressions, laughter, eye contact.

"Peace," started Br. Augustine Hoelke '00, who began studying for his master's in Spanish at the University of North Texas this semester, "We live in peace. Twelve talented, driven young men with vastly differing personalities and interests, and yet we have learned not only to tolerate each other, but to appreciate each brother's unique gifts and personality."

"Seldom is heard a discouraging word, you might say, and most outstanding of all," Br. Augustine added, "we ac-

**CENTERED ON PRAYER** The young monks arrive at the Abbey Church early (photos at the top of the opposite page) for the Divine Office (large photo below), one of the four communal prayers of the day.





usually enjoy praying together every day! Our daily life is nourished by prayer and reaches its finest crystallization in the daily prayers and worship that we share.”

“We are a community centered on prayer and the sacraments,” pointed out Br. Anthony Bigney, an enthusiastic rec basketball player. “We celebrate mass together every morning; we pray at least four times a day together, and beyond the general requirements of the monastic office of prayer, we end each day by reciting the rosary together.”

“This is not a natural group — it’s a supernatural group.”

But these are not hermit monks.

“The public perception that to be a monk means to withdraw from society and live in absolute solitude simply does not apply to our way of life,” Br. Nathanael Frei pointed out.

“For me,” remarked Br. John Bayer, “it wasn’t a desire to live a monastic life or the desire to teach which drew me in but the call to deeper personal relationships, to the sharing of ourselves at the deepest level, and thereby our drawing out of ourselves into something larger. That was what was most important to me.”

“One could write a book, or even a series of books, on the nature and character of the community of brothers,” suggested Br. Ambrose Strong.

“First of all,” he asserted, “it’s not some kind of static, never-changing reality, but a community that has gradually grown in number over the last few years and carefully transformed into its current shape.”

The semicircle of brothers facing me arched across almost the full width of the small classroom. But over the past seven years, similar gatherings would have included varying numbers, and a few faces that are no longer present.

“*I will take the Ring, though I do not know the way,*” said Br. Stephen Gregg ’01, a reference to Frodo’s leap of faith at the Council of Elrond in Tolkien’s *Fellowship of the Ring*. “That always resounds in my mind as a sort of vocation slogan.”

“Entering the abbey as a young brother is difficult because the environment is so foreign for anyone who was born and raised in America during the last thirty or forty years,” Br. Lawrence Brophy ’01 offered.

“Since we entered kindergarten at age five,” he explained, “we’re almost constantly surrounded by people our own age.”

“In the abbey, everyday we see lots of old men, some of whom can barely walk. That shocks your sensibilities.”

Then there are the adjustments to the monastery’s community life. The teachings of St. Bernard strongly discourage *singularitas* (i.e., standing apart from the community).

“Did we have to leave behind something of our own personalities, senses of humor, gifts, and talents upon entering the monastery?” Br. Ambrose asked.

“Not at all,” he insisted. “We discover our true selves in the monastery and learn how to place ourselves at its service and the service of others. This idea is an indispensable part of who we are and how we thrive as a group of eleven brothers.”

“St. Bernard’s text pushes us to avoid showy and meaningless in-



**A LITTLE RECREATION TIME**  
We tried to catch the brothers in a rare recreational moment together (note: Brs. Augustine and Nathanael are not pictured). Left (clockwise from bottom left): Br. Philip, Br. John, Br. Ambrose, Br. Justin McNamara, Br. Lawrence, and Br. Anthony. Top (l-r) Fr. Joseph, Br. Ambrose, and Br. Stephen. Right (l-r): Br. Thomas Esposito and Br. Ignatius.



dividuality,” said Br. Lawrence. “But with the academic, household, and spiritual demands put on us (not to mention the close proximity of our lives) our unique talents, strengths, and weaknesses can’t help but become evident.”

They were fully engaged now in pursuing a topic which in their ordinary, daily routines it would not have occurred to them to pursue.

“In the other members of the community,” observed Br. Ignatius Peacher, “I am surrounded with gifts that enrich my life.”

“It is like having your own secretary or consultant,” he added, “you can learn so much without having to look any of it up.”

This comment drew a thumbs-up burst of laughter from several brothers who also had occasionally needed last-minute help to complete a paper.

And the support extends well beyond academics.

“During my first year, there were only four of us brothers,” recalled Br. Philip Lastimosa ’00, “and I was pretty unhappy.”

“Even after three more joined the next year — though it was better — for me, it still was not completely right.

“It wasn’t until our numbers were up to ten that I began to feel really comfortable.”

“When I think about Fr. Mark and Fr. Paul as brothers,” Br. Philip added, “they were crazy heroic to be able to find their way to loving this life and this place without the support of others going through everything with them.”

“I do not think I would have the strength to do that.”

The brothers’ numbers began growing several years after Steven Reinemund ’99 spearheaded the renovation of the retreat house in 1997 (the year of the ordination of Fr. Paul McCormick, the last

ordination until Fr. Joseph’s).

“When we met in the retreat house, seated around the huge, cold marble table week after week,” said Br. Stephen of the Bible studies that he and Br. Lawrence attended while still students at the prep school, “it was as if it had been placed there for no other purpose than our use.”

“The retreat house gave us the sense of having taken a step closer to the monastery.”

“The month I spent in the retreat house before my senior year at UD,” remembered Br. Joseph, “was full of sharing meals and prayer with the community. It was a turning point in my decision to enter the monastery after graduation.”

Br. Ignatius lived in the retreat house for almost two years while pursuing an architecture degree at UTA; though at the time he had no interest in pursuing a vocation, once he had moved on, he found himself missing the place and returned to discover he had a vocation.

In the retreat house, those interested in a vocation could test the openness, the generosity, and the sense of sacrifice that characterizes a serious commitment to the Cistercian community.

“Our formation is a long and at times gruelling process,” noted Br. Lawrence. “Tangible progress toward the goal of ordination comes slowly and in pretty minor steps.”

“Seeing Joseph ordained is beyond encouraging,” he added. “It is a relief to know that one can make it that far.”

A week after Joseph’s ordination, Br. Augustine and Br. Philip joined the diaconate, while Brs. Thomas, Ambrose, and Ignatius renewed their vows.

“When I made my solemn vows on August 20th,” said Br. Augustine, “part of the ritual involves a sign of peace from each permanent member of the community.”

“I realized then in a very powerful way that I can trust each one of the members of the community, no matter how young or old, with my very life—indeed, with my *eternal* life!”

Today, the monastery is composed of eleven members over the age of 70 (37 percent), seven between the ages of 35 and 70 (23

percent), and 12 below the age of 35 (40 percent).

“We’re constantly reminded that the strength and vitality we now enjoy is only temporary,” Br. Lawrence said.

“We all understand the importance of taking breakfast to an older father who can’t make it down to the refectory, or helping one of the older fathers to put his socks and shoes on because he has difficulties doing that.”

“The love and care of the brothers,” Fr. Roch Kereszty noted in a discussion about the young monks’ impact on the community, “has literally prolonged the lives of some of the very frail elderly monks.”

The benefits are mutual.

“There is a certain consistency that binds us all together,” insisted Br. Ambrose. “It is defined by the community’s past and present members.”

“And so as brothers we are not setting out to do something new, irrespective of our original roots and our past history. We take pride in the heritage of our monastery and all of the work and sacrifice that went into making it flourish.

“That’s why we are eager to listen and learn from those founders still in the monastery who continue to teach us about our great traditions, who with great effort strive to form us into men of virtue and inspire us to lead holy lives.”

“For the old generation of monks,” Fr. Roch noted, “the brothers’ arrival and perseverance is a sign from Providence that God wants our community to continue and to improve its life and work.

“Where God’s grace works, the impossible happens naturally. And this is what we see now on a daily basis: older and younger, Hungarian and American being drawn into a community of prayer and work.”

“Their presence rekindles our own call,” said Fr. Roch. “It makes us aware of our ‘invisible resources.’”

“God listened to the prayers of our Cistercian ‘martyrs’ in Hungary — men like Fr. Lawrence ’Sigmund and Abbot Wendelin Endrédy — who sacrificed so much for the future of the Order.”

The character of their community is not something analyzed but something lived in the routine of prayer and study and in the activities of a common life lived alongside their brothers. Yet, they had seemed quite eager to share a moment together reflecting on the importance of their vocations and the quality of their friendships.

“I anticipate that as we assume a greater role in priestly activities and teaching at the school, we will have fewer opportunities simply to ‘hang out,’” commented Br. Nathanael.

“But the bond that is already present among the brothers will help us to rely on one another in the future for advice, support, and help. It has created a great sense of trust in one another.”

“We do indeed have a family here that takes care of itself because of the love that exists here,” Br. Nathanael continued.

“I suppose I am saying that I anticipate our relationships to mature in such a way that we can always be sure of each other’s commitment to serve as priests, teachers, and confreres.

*Amator regulae, amator loci, amator fratrum*: so reads the advice given for maintaining the three dimensions of a healthy monastic community in the *Exordium Parvum*, a twelfth-century document detailing the founding of the monastery at Citeaux.

That a monk should be “a lover of the Rule [of St. Benedict], a lover of the place, and a lover of the brothers” expresses an ideal of monastic life that is alive and well in the 21st century at the Cistercian Abbey.

tpruit@cistercian.org



SWIMMING/DIVING

Season starts with a landmark win at St. Mark's

In the wake of last year's third-place finish at SPC, the 2008-09 Hawks' squad attracted 20 swimmers and three divers, Cistercian's largest aquatic contingent ever.

This year's team started with a loud boom — that of Cistercian defeating perennial powerhouse St. Mark's, albeit by the slimmest of margins, 92-91.

Coach Doug Moyse and captains **Michael Lawson '09** and **Matt Roney '10** also led the AquaHawks to the team's first-ever out-of-state competition at the Casady Invitational Meet in Oklahoma.

At SPC, Roney dominated his individuals events, winning the 200 free by six seconds (1:42.29) and the 100 fly by four seconds (53.51).

Cistercian placed third in the 400-freestyle relay behind the work of **Sam McGraw '12**, Lawson, **Tyler Freeman '10**, and Roney.

In the 200-freestyle relay, **Marty Gatens '11**, Lawson, Freeman, and **Forrest Rahn '12** swam to a fourth-place finish.

The young team of Freeman, McGraw, Gatens, and Rahn placed seventh in the 200 Medley Relay

Each member of Cistercian's diving team also scored points with **Dash Jordan '09** winning first place, Dean Leonard winning third, and the versatile Freeman placing fourth.

Overall, Cistercian finished a very respectable fourth place at SPC.

CISTERCIAN'S FIRST PAIR OF SPC-II CHAMPS

SPC-II SOCCER CHAMPIONS

Persistence and teamwork lead to title

The Hawks' first soccer championship since 1989 did not come easily.

In the end, Coach J.P. Walsh's emphasis on teamwork, passing, and depth helped Cistercian prevail in the final minutes of a see-saw SPC-II championship game against Oakridge.



**RAIN MAKER** Team MVP Paul Pesek scored a goal and assisted on the winning goal in the championship game. He is playing at Wheaton College this fall.

**Ramon Cordova '09** gave the Hawks an early lead, heading in a corner kick from **Patrick Cruz '11**. Oakridge drew even just before the break.

In the second half, **Joe Graham '10** slotted a nice pass to **Paul Pesek '09** who scored far-post to give Cistercian a 2-1 lead. With five minutes left, hearts sank as Oakridge tied the game 2-2.

Then, with just over a minute remaining, Pesek sent a long cross into the box where **Andy Burns '10** flicked the ball into the back of the net for the win.

"It was an exciting finish to an outstanding season," said Coach Walsh. "I am incredibly proud of the team!"

Strong defensive efforts were turned in by **Adam Sherburne '09**, **Marcus Burnside '09**, **Aaron Olson '10**, **Steven Imaizumi '10**, and goalkeeper **Matt Lenzen '10**.

**Nick Echevarria '09** and **George Adesanya '11** helped lead the attack, while **Pete Smith '11**, **Ryan Martinez '11**, **Will Halle '11**, and **Shane Macedonio '12** worked tirelessly in the midfield.

SPC-II BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS

A depth of talent take Hawks to the top

Outscored 16-2 in the *first five minutes* of their SPC Division II semifinal match against Houston Episcopal, Cistercian Head Basketball Coach Dan Lee decided a time out was in order.

"They were really big," Lee remembered. "We had to press them to offset their size, but we weren't making any shots so we couldn't set up our press."

It was just after 9 am.

A few key substitutions, a deep breath or two, and the Hawks woke up and controlled the rest of the game.

Despite desperate, home-court play by the Knights, the Hawks won by 10 points.

Six hours later, Cistercian disposed of Casady, winning the Division II Championship for the first time since 1993.

The championship represents the culmination of a program that has been growing and improving since the completion of the new gym in 2005

"Each of the three victories at SPC was a team effort," marveled Lee. "We had 11 to 12 guys contributing. We just wore out our opponents."

The team's leading scorers, **Addison White '09** and **Holden Godat '09**, earned All-SPC honors.

"**Will Garnett '09** served as the glue of the team," Lee said. "**Giancarlo Carleo '09**, **Drew Albert '09**, **Max Tenney '09** were great."

"And we had an outstanding crop of juniors in **Ian White '10**, **Bobby Prenalge '10**, **Jack Cox '10**, and **David Newcomb '10**."

"They gave us the luxury of playing a very up-tempo style that proved to be championship caliber."



**MAN IN THE MIDDLE** Addison White '09 scores against Houston Episcopal.

Photo by John Branch

TRACK

Stars Newcomb and Graham shine

The 2009 track season will be remembered as a season of remarkable performances by the versatile **David Newcomb '10** and hurdler **Joe Graham '10**.

and relays. "It's by far the most impressive point total that I can remember," said McCarthy.



**HIGH SCORER** By excelling at high jump, long jump, sprints and sprint relays, **David Newcomb '10** contributed 140.5 points to the track team this year, setting a school record.

Newcomb piled up 140.5 points by winning (or placing second in) most high jump contests, and performing well in other jumping events, sprints,

Graham earned All-SPC honors.

Baseball: Hawks miss SPC-I tournament by a hair

Down 10-12 to ESD in the top of the seventh, pitcher **Adam Sherburne '09** hit a two-run home run to tie it up. The Hawks scored four more to win 16-12.

**Nick Gurguis '10**, the team's ace for the second year in a row, came in and closed out the win. Unfortunately, the Hawks lost to Greenhill the next day, 7-4, dropping them out of a SPC Division I spot by one run.

Gurguis performed well on the mound, throwing a no-hitter against Colleyville Covenant and one-hitters against Austin St. Stephen's and St. Mary's Hall.

Sherburne (shortstop) hit 4.75 with 21 RBIs and three home runs. **Holden Godat '09** (left field) hit 4.20, and **Steven Imaizumi '10** (center fielder) hit 3.52.

Tennis: Young team full of promise for the future

Cistercian hosted the SPC Division II Tennis Tournament, and almost parlayed the home-court advantage into a championship. The loss to St. John's in the championship was, however, tempered by the team's yearlong improvement and youth.

Underclassmen helped to power the team to its 4-4 regular season record and its success in the tournament. The Hawks' #1 singles player, **Scott Sloan '10**, "came up with some big wins for us" said Coach Skip Boyden. Sloan earned All-SPC honors.

But he was kept on his toes by **George Adesanya '11**, who generated more victories as the #2 singles player and as a member of the #2 doubles team.

**Graham Albert '11** earned "top newcomer" honors from Boyden and the doubles team of **Wes Johnston '10** and **Will Halle '11** were awarded "most improved."

FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Wing-T and speed could be winning combination

"We've got a lot of speed this year," beamed Steve McCarthy, the Hawks' head football coach.

"It will be interesting to see how it changes the way our offense plays."

The Hawks will run the same Wing-T offense the team adopted last year.

"This year, the team and the coaches have grown much more familiar with the Wing-T offense that relies a lot on misdirection," McCarthy said.

The addition of 6' 2", 235-pound **Joe Graham '10**, formerly of the offensive line, will add significant power to the running game.

He will complement the speed and quickness of **Steven Imaizumi '10** and **George Adesanya '11**.

Quarterback duties will be shared by **Bobby Prenalge '10**, who is more of a passer, and **Patrick Cruz '11**, who is more of a runner.

FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

2009 Hawks

Aug 28	Greenhill	7:30
Sep 4	@ FW Christian	7:30
Sep 11	Grapevine Faith	7:30
Sep 19	@ Country Day	7:30
Sep 25	St. Stephen's	7:30
Oct 2	@ St. Andrews	7
Oct 9	Oakridge	7:30
Oct 16	@ Trinity Valley	7:30
Oct 23	ESD	7:30
Oct 30	@ All Saints	7:30

Games in color played at home.



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## calendar

### SEPTEMBER

25 Homecoming  
vs. Austin St. Stephens

### NOVEMBER

2-3 Alumni Phonathon  
14 Memorare Mass

### DECEMBER

19 Alumni Christmas Party

### JANUARY

29 Moroney Award Dinner

CISTERCIAN  
PREPARATORY SCHOOL  
3660 CISTERCIAN ROAD  
IRVING, TEXAS 75039

## “Great men dare great things” (yes, even Christians)

The above statement of St. Bernard, the humble monk, may surprise some of you. In fact, among believers and unbelievers alike you find a widespread conviction that true Christians are not supposed to strive for greatness, but remain contented with being small and insignificant, unknown and child-like.



On Prayer

Fr. Roch Kereszty

It is true that real humility does not seek false greatness. We should be grateful for the talents we have received and redouble them rather than attempt to appear more talented and more virtuous than we are. And even the greatest genius is small in comparison to God. The ideal of spiritual childhood has nothing to do with the naiveté and helplessness of a permanent minor — it is childlike trust in God.

St. Bernard, however, does not encourage anyone to seek greatness by accumulating power, riches and fame, yet he did not tell the emperor or the kings to abandon their post of leadership; rather, they should use power and wealth in service for the good of their subjects. The greatness Bernard encourages is to strive boldly for great faith and trust in God.

There is no limit to the power of God on whom the believing Christian relies. “All things are possible for the one who believes” (Mk 9:23) as Bernard says, quoting the saying of Jesus for the timid and comfortable souls among his readers because — in the words of Paul — “I can do everything in the one who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13). The conclusion Bernard draws from the words of Jesus and Paul is bold indeed: “Isn’t that person almighty who can do all things?”

This limitless trust in God Bernard calls magnanimity, literally, having a great soul. It is not opposed to humility, but to pusillanimity, which literally means having a small soul. The pusillanimous soul does not dare to trust that God fulfills his promises and that He overwhelms the soul with great gifts and ultimately with His gift of Self. Magnanimous people, on the contrary, dare to ask for great things. They are like Moses who asked God to reveal to him his face, or the apostle Philip who asked Jesus to show him the Father, or the apostle Thomas who wanted to put his hand into the side wound of Jesus. Their great desires were fulfilled because their trust was great.

The greater our trust, the greater things we will obtain. The prom-

ise of God to the Israelites who were exploring the promised land, applies also to us: “Every place your foot (of faith) will tread upon shall be yours” (Deut 11:24). Magnanimous souls, no matter how enslaved and overburdened by sin they are, may and should aspire to become the spouse of Christ and be united with him as “one spirit” with God (*On the Song of Songs* 32. 9; 83.1-2).

True humility and magnanimity belong together, and the latter results from the former. We see the connection and the perfection of both in Mary:

In her own judgment she was so humble, nevertheless in her trust in the promise she was so magnanimous that she who had regarded herself as a handmaid of little worth did not at all doubt her election for this incomprehensible mystery, for this marvelous exchange and inscrutable sacrament and believed that she would soon become the true mother of the God-man.

— *On the Octave of the Assumption of Mary* #13

True humility, then, does not make us men of little faith, nor does magnanimity lead us to arrogance. On the contrary, the less we presume to accomplish by ourselves, the more we trust to do great things by God’s power. If one presumes to act without faith, it does not derive from a solid greatness of soul. Such a person is like a balloon filled with hot air, suffering from the tumor of an inflated ego (*5 Ascens* 2).

When applying St. Bernard’s teaching to our own lives, we can ask: What do I desire most? To live comfortably, have power, influence and fame? Have I gradually suppressed any ambition that point beyond this world? Obviously, we need the goods of this world to take care of our families and to be of service to others. But if we narrow our ambitions to the dimensions of this short life here on earth, our souls will gradually atrophy and shrink in proportion to the small capacity of our desires. We will make ourselves incapable of tasting the true joys of life.

Do we dare to be magnanimous, asking God with our whole heart, with boundless trust to make us holy, knowing that his will for us is “our sanctification” (1 Thes 4:3). Do we really want to live in intimate union with Christ, becoming one Body and one Spirit with Him? We should not stop begging that God will stretch our minds and hearts wide as to “possess” His infinite light and love.

email: fr-roch@cistercian.org