

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School



CONTINUUM

December 2004

A group of four smiling students (two boys and two girls) are the central focus of the cover. They are dressed in casual attire, including polo shirts and a sweater. The background shows a party scene with string lights, streamers, and other students in a dimly lit room. A table with a white tablecloth and greenery is visible in the foreground.

A social evolution

An improved party scene has changed Cistercian students for the better.

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Grade point averages are going up

So have our boys become "brainiacs" who are devoid of other talents?

At a recent meeting, several faculty members observed that class averages now tend to hover around the 3.3 mark, not 2.9 as in years past. Is the admissions committee admitting stronger students?



Letter from the Headmaster

*Fr. Peter
Verhalen '73*

Is the faculty becoming less demanding? Are the boys studying harder? Another observation followed: the students' standardized test scores, specifically the Advanced Placement test scores, are also soaring. Have our boys become "brainiacs" who are devoid of other talents?

Such a hypothesis appears unlikely based on further observations. We have more boys than ever participating in athletics (e.g., this winter the Upper School is fielding a swim team, three soccer teams, and four basketball teams). Cistercian students organize the annual Down Syndrome Guild Dance, act as volunteers for the Special Olympics, work at

various soup kitchens, and tutor. This fall, eight Boy Scouts in Forms III and IV have been preparing for the Ad Altare Dei merit badge. Most recently, Dave Tanner directed 30 Third and Fourth Formers in *The Trinity River Dance*, this year's Middle School drama. Packed audiences at both performances laughed nearly nonstop as the boys imitated Cistercian faculty (e.g., **Pablo Muldoon '09** as Senor Doroga, **Will Schleier '09** as Mr. Haaser, **Bobby Prengle '10** as Fr. Mark, and **Michael Korpel '10** as yours truly). The hilarious caricatures proved how strongly the boys identify with their school and teachers, and that they possess talents far beyond those they demonstrate in the classroom.

You might guess then that all these bright boys must lack in the social graces. In this edition's entertaining lead feature, **David Stewart '74** finds quite the opposite, contending that the school helps our students grow into mature, confident young men.

So, we have much to be grateful for: great boys, dedicated teachers, and wonderful priests. By the way, don't miss Dr. Pruitt's moving story on Fr. Henry Marton, or our two regular columns.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *The Continuum*.

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in this issue



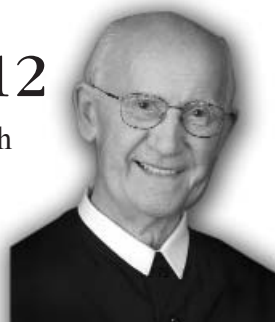
A social evolution

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With a school-related social event nearly every weekend, today's Cistercian students have lost much of the social awkwardness of days gone by.

Cloud of witnesses 12

A brush with death
has strengthened
Fr. Henry
Marton's desire
to touch people.



Cover photography: Jim Reisch

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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, national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational practices, admissions, scholarship programs, and athletic and other school administered programs.

Homecoming festivities

Auction nets \$35,000 for scholarships

A revamped and reinvigorated Silent Auction took center stage at this year's Homecoming game festivities, helping to draw the largest crowd and to raise money for two important scholarship funds.

Those alumni familiar with auctions past (held at Alumni Casino Nights over the Christmas holidays), couldn't believe their eyes.

On display were more than 137 items, from art and vacations to collectibles and the indescribable (e.g., half hour in the radio booth at 1310AM with The Ticket's Dunham and Miller).

In all, 70 people purchased the donated items (valued at more than \$41,000) to raise \$35,000 for the school.

"A primary motivation behind this move," said **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73** "was to finish off the funding for the scholarships in honor of **Seth Henderson '03** and Coach Tom Hillary. Of course, we also wanted to attract

more folks to the Homecoming."

Both missions were accomplished. While previous auctions netted approximately \$5,000 each year, the Homecoming auction raised enough money to complete the funding of both the Seth Henderson Memorial Scholarship and the Tom Hillary Award.

The Henderson Scholarship will be given to a current Cistercian student. The Hillary Award now will have a monetary prize connected to it, providing funds to a graduating senior (for more on the Hillary

Award, see the following story).

Jennifer Rotter, director of development, orchestrated the auction with help from Sally Cook, Rob Montemayor, and Robin Springer. They solicited the donation of items, worked with underwriters, and coordinated all of the volunteers for the event.

"Jennifer did a phenomenal job infusing the whole event with energy and enthusiasm," Fr. Peter said.

Next year's auction is expected to help fund additional scholarships.



Ryan Chism (Latin), Melanie Boultinghouse (Spanish), and Dr. David Andrews (math) are the newest additions to the Cistercian faculty.

A combination of youth and experience

The A-B-C's of this year's new teachers

Cistercian's newest teachers — David Andrews, Melanie Boultinghouse, and Ryan Chism — wasted little time moving right to the top, top of the alphabetical listing in the directory that is.

Dr. David Andrews, father of **Joseph Andrews '12** and **Matthias Andrews '09**, decided it was time to come and teach at Cistercian. His second son, Joseph, was entering Cistercian and Dr. Andrews had secured tenure after six years as UD professor. He decided to take a leave of absence and test the waters across Highway 114.

Dr. Andrews, who is teaching Pre-Algebra (III) and Pre-Calculus (VII), earned his Ph.D. from Rice University (specializing in statistics), his M.S. from Purdue University, and his B.S. from UD.

Melanie Boultinghouse comes to Cistercian from Academy of Irving. The Plano native teaches Spanish (V-VIII). She became interested in Cistercian through her work with Cistercian Spanish teacher Jason Duroga, with whom she had worked as both pursue their masters in Spanish at UTA.

Boultinghouse earned her undergraduate degree in Spanish from Trinity University.

Ryan Chism, a UD grad who teaches Latin (II), learned about Cistercian through Brs. Augustine, Joseph, and Abraham. The Latin major is pursuing his masters in humanities at UD. Wife Katherine recently gave birth to the couple's first child, John Patrick Chism.



Photo by Cambria Reinborough

Alumni Mark Talkington '79 and Bill O'Connor '79 check out items at this year's auction.



Photo courtesy of Dr. Robert J. Henderson

The Hillary Award is being sculpted by Jeff Wolf and will measure 20 inches tall.

Athletics

New look for the Hillary Award to debut in spring

The Tom Hillary Award, bestowed upon the student whose behavior best emulates the qualities of the late Cistercian football coach, is undergoing a few changes.

Since Coach Hillary passed away in April 2000, Cistercian's most valued sports honor has been presented only twice (to **Tyler Wolf '01** and to **Seth Henderson '03**).

But now, with over \$50,000 in the Tom Hillary Scholarship Fund (see auction story above),

Letter: Hillary's teen years
Please see page 20.

the award will include a stipend and will be awarded annually.

Dr. Robert J. Henderson has stepped in to enhance the award's prestige further.

"Tom Hillary had a huge influence on Seth as he did on so many boys," said Dr. Henderson.

"I think all of the characteristics that he tried to instill in the boys are worthwhile in perpetuating," Dr. Henderson said. "They fall perfectly in line with what Cistercian strives to instill in the boys."

Dr. Henderson has commissioned a 20-inch sculpture that depicts Coach Hillary standing with a football player, capturing the towering role that Coach Hillary played in so many lives.

The trophy will be unveiled at the athletic banquet in the spring and will remain in the school's trophy case. Winners' names will be inscribed on a plaque attached to the trophy.

Paying for college

Cistercian grads receiving more scholarship funds

As colleges become increasingly expensive, the institutions of higher learning are offering Cistercian seniors more help to pay the bills.

The number of Cistercian graduates accepting that help also is growing.

A total of 28 members of the Class of '04 (66 percent of the 42 students) received scholarship offers amounting to over \$773,000.

While over \$798,000 was offered to the 45 members of the Class of '03, the average offer per student increased from \$17,754 to \$18,423 from 2003 to 2004.

It should be noted that the above figures account only for offers from schools that Cistercian students seriously considered.

Twenty-one members of the Class of '04 accepted offers totalling just under \$316,000 compared with the 17 who

Community celebrates the life of Cistercian pioneer Beth Smith

The abbey church was filled July 7, 2004 as the Cistercian Community came together to celebrate the life of Beth Smith. A woman of remarkable talents and determination, Mrs. Smith played key roles in the founding and development of Cistercian Prep School.

She joined with Jane Bret and Pat Healy to become the "founding moms" of the school. It was said that on the first day of school at the original campus, she was seen mowing the grass.

Mrs. Smith and husband Bryan Smith sent five sons through Cistercian (**Buck Smith '71, Jimmy Smith '72, Peter Smith '74, Mike Smith '77, and Paul Smith '78**) and one grandson (**Pete Smith '11**).

She passed away July 1, 2004. The service at Cistercian was conducted by **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73**.

accepted \$272,153 in monies in 2003.

The scholarships accepted in 2004 ranged from under \$1,000 to \$65,000.

Six members of the Class of '04 accepted four-year scholarships to Harvard, Princeton, University of Oklahoma, Davidson, UT Austin, and the US Naval Academy.

Faculty recognition

Math guru Dr. Richard Newcomb walks the walk

Dr. Richard Newcomb, who has led Cistercian's mathletes to countless conquests over the years, has long been recognized as a major force among the state's top math schools.

Now he has some hardware to prove it.

In September, the American

High School Internet Mathematics Competition (AHSIMC) announced that Dr. Newcomb was awarded the Sponsor's Award for Exceptional Teaching.

Dr. Newcomb received a commemorative plaque, \$100 cash award, and two copies of the 2004 AHSIMC Solutions Guide for continued educational use in the classroom.

At last spring's Mathcounts state championships in Austin, Newcomb's competitive fire was given a stage.


Each year, math teachers are randomly selected to compete in head-to-head contests. Problems are flashed on a screen and contestants buzz in to signal they are prepared with the answer. The first to answer two out of three problems moves on to the next round.

To no one's surprise, Dr. Newcomb quickly progressed to the championship round where he clobbered last year's winner.

"I enjoyed it," admitted Dr. Newcomb. "It gave the guys a good feeling going into their competition."

The Cistercian math team, it should be noted, finished 13th in the state Mathcounts competition and first among all private schools.

Championship supplies



Booster Club execs Karl Springer (left) and Bob Crews pose with Robin Springer and supplies purchased for sale at the SPC-II Championship game, the first ever held at Cistercian.

noteworthy

■ **Pixar:** After earning a masters degree from Texas A&M's Viz Lab program, **Jon Reisch '98** is interning in the special effects department at Pixar Animation Studios. Reisch is already enjoying the experience and is working on aspects of the studio's next film, *Cars*, scheduled for release next fall.

■ **Book Fair:** This year's Book Fair will introduce a new feature designed to attract more alumni to the annual event. Form masters will host special gatherings of all the students they led through the school. This year's featured form master is Fr. Henry Marton (Classes of '72, '80, '88, and '96).

■ **African trip:** **Juan Muldoon '05** will accompany **Tom Lewis '73** to Africa for a two-week community service effort in January.

Photo by Jim Reisch



Jon Reisch '98 at Pixar Studios where he is serving as an intern.



Photo by Jim Reisch

A social evolution

With a school-related social event nearly every weekend, today's Cistercian students have lost much of the social awkwardness of days gone by.

By David Stewart '74

“IN YOUR FIRST COUPLE OF YEARS IN UPPER SCHOOL,” Robbie Earle '05 reflected recently, “you feel some pressure to be cool. You want to bring a girl to the Homecoming Dance who other people think is pretty. It should be someone who you like too; but, as a freshman or sophomore, the probabilities of that are not in your favor.”

“I spent the Freshmen Mixer avoiding people,” remembered Weston McBride '05, student government president. “I left with no phone numbers or IM addresses. Freshman year, I was social within the class but not with girls. I stayed away from them.”

“Sophomore year I began meeting people and doing things with coed groups. I still wasn't quite out of my socially inept days,” he said, “but I was on my way.”

“Sophomore year was when I met a lot of new people at school-sponsored social events and other places,” agreed Jacob Arias '04, a freshman at Stanford. “It was a rough year in many ways, but it was also the year of branching out to other schools (not just Ursuline and Hockaday), like Macarthur, Irving, Coppell, Bishop Lynch, and Highland Park.

“It was sort of a trial run of what would come later. I was able to meet guys and girls from different backgrounds and see how I was able to interact with them. Learning the do's and the don'ts of those interactions helped reduce my 'social awkwardness.'”

“Life at Cistercian,” noted Tom Stimson '78, “can be intimidating, especially for those of more modest means. Here we are rubbing elbows with the sons of people so rich they don't have to be famous. We go on class outings to country estates or ranches and we attend birthday parties that have their own waiters.

“But after a few years you find that while opportunity may be different from one boy to the next, in life (and love) we are all on a level playing field. That is one of the greatest gifts of the Cistercian experience; the knowledge that the only opportunities that count are yours and all that matters is what you do with them.”

“What I like about Cistercian,” McBride commented, “is that there are all these incredibly smart kids

EXUBERANT partygoers at the Down Syndrome Guild Dance enjoy the music. Cistercian hosts the early November event in conjunction with students from Ursuline and Hockaday.

who can choose their lifestyle. You can be smart, social, athletic, whatever you want. You don't get stuck in a clique or social hierarchy."

Take Robbie Earle for instance.

A National Merit Semi-Finalist, Earle has a penchant for grasping the big picture but not necessarily sweating the details (e.g., grades). Earle plays drums in a band ("Whatever Happened to the Communists"), is a motivating force behind Cistercian's debate team, and, most recently, was named a captain of the football team. It doesn't seem to make a difference that his dad didn't make the *Forbes 400 Wealthiest Americans*.

"Being named a captain meant a lot to Robbie," said Fr. Paul McCormick, form master of the senior class. "It meant he had earned the respect of his peers. It was definitely a part of his blossoming."

"I am less self-conscious now," Earle suggested. "My classmates know who I am so I can just be myself. I was really looking forward to this Homecoming and having a great time with my date and my classmates and enjoying the music and activities."

"WOULD YOU BOYS LIKE TO PAINT SOME GRAFFITI?" asked a couple of moms who rushed up to Scott Novak '05 and a few of his classmates during one of the many hectic afternoons that Cistercian boys spent decorating the gym for Homecoming 2004. This year's theme: The Eighties.

"Heck yea," answered Novak, as if nothing could be more obvious. The graffiti would give an authentic feel to the 15-foot Berlin Wall that had been erected as a reminder of the end of the decade.

"All of the students were motivated to make our Homecoming special," said Earle. "If anyone had a good idea, they could approach Weston and put it into action."

"We started working on Homecoming during the summer through a series of meetings with the senior class officers, Fr. Paul, Mrs. [Barbara] Moroney, and Mrs. [Brenda] Welch," recalled McBride.

"It was all driven by the boys," insisted Mrs. Moroney. "I helped with organization and Brenda was a fabulous resource person. But the creative aspect was all in the boys' hands."

"We have a lot of faith in our classmates," McBride added. "It can be risky to let them run with a theme, but we were very pleased with what they produced."

"None of this was mandatory," he emphasized, "they came of their own free will. And we couldn't have done it without them."

"Decorating for Homecoming this year was one of the neatest experiences I have seen at Cistercian," said Bev Dale. "To watch all those boys take ownership of decorating the gym was awesome. I enjoyed seeing these really bright boys get together and be so creative, solve problems, talk through ideas and figure out how to get it done."

"It's a lesson in teamwork," added Mrs. Moroney. "With their studies, sports, and some of them applying early decision to college, it can be tough. But they stepped up to the plate and got it done."

Over the years, Cistercian parties have developed an impressive reputation in the single-sex, private school community.

"It's one place where Cistercian can shine," suggested Mrs. Moroney. "The parties are entertaining because there is so much to do."

Each year's Homecoming requires new decorations and props (e.g., the Berlin Wall), the games (e.g., the dance machine, televi-

"I wanted us to provide a support group, a context in which the kids would be more likely to make the right decisions."

— Fr. Peter Verhalen '73

sions with movies playing), and casino tables.

Then there's a virtual warehouse of party paraphernalia that has been accumulated over the years and stored in the gym. This party warehouse includes boxes and boxes of decorations used for the Freshman Mixer, Homecoming, and other events. There is an endless string of lights, and even a disco dance floor that lights up, inspired by Saturday Night Fever (built

in the fall of 1999 by Greg Novinski '82 and his brother David Novinski '90 along with members of the Class of '00).

"All the elements create a very welcoming environment," Mrs. Moroney said. "The boys don't have to rely exclusively on conversation when they bring a girl they don't know very well. It's good for the girls too. Girls have their own problems with awkwardness. Let's remember that none of these kids is very socially adept at this age."

SENIORS AND THEIR DATES SCATTERED into the darkness of an October night in 1990. They weren't coming back. The numbers leaving this Homecoming party could not be ignored. Fr. Peter Verhalen '73, student government sponsor, made his way down to the lower parking lot and pleaded with them to stay. He was concerned how the younger boys would react to upperclassmen leaving the party.

But Fr. Peter knew that the onus for the exodus did not lie on the students alone. Cistercian parties failed to provide much entertainment. Fr. Peter could hardly blame the students for wanting to leave.

Part of this party-challenged culture was promoted by the Hungarian monks who had set a social course for Cistercian that reflected their Old World educational system. In Hungary, schools played an exclusively academic role; social and athletic activities took place outside of school. By importing this model to Texas, the monks had left Cistercian students to their own devices. Fr. Peter knew that could be dangerous.

"This Old World philosophy has merit," admitted Fr. Peter. "We don't want to get to the point that we're taking over the parents' role."

"On the other hand," he said, "my concern at the end of the eighties was that this philosophy was abandoning our students to negative societal influences. I wanted the school to create parties that were so much fun that the boys wouldn't want to leave. I wanted us to provide a support group, a context in which the kids would be more likely to make the right decisions."

Fr. Peter enlisted the help of parents and several young, energetic faculty members in the effort to throw better parties.

"Greg Novinski and Jonathan Leach helped give the party planning direction," Fr. Peter remembered. "It was in the early nineties that Greg suggested dropping the ceiling in the gym to give the space a more intimate atmosphere."

Ping pong and pool tables were rented. The senior photo was scheduled for 11:30 pm. Such adjustments began to make a difference. Boys and their dates started to find reasons to stick around.

The Cistercian social scene took another step forward in the late eighties when after-game parties were introduced.

"Parents stepped in to organize them," Novinski said. "Initially they were not hugely attended. It was mostly upperclassmen. Parents chaperoned, but the school was not officially involved."

"A few incidents in 1993 and 1994 forced us to draw up some official guidelines on how these events should be chaperoned and

supervised. From that point forward, these parties became official functions of the school at which school rules applied and administrators or faculty of the school were present.”

IN NOVEMBER 2002, *D MAGAZINE*'S REVIEW OF PRIVATE schools described some Cistercian students as “socially awkward.” A few parents were surprised and offended. But the words resonated with many who had been affiliated with the school for a long period of time.

“Cistercian doesn’t have a true sister school, and it shows,” the magazine opined. “Even many seniors tend to be socially awkward — though ‘many’ is a relative term because an entire senior class will comprise fewer than 40 boys.”

The socially awkward stereotype dates back to the seventies when Cistercian students felt ostracized by the school’s location, its newness, its size, and even its unusual name.

Over the years, Cistercian students felt, and sometimes still do feel, like interlopers at Hockaday and Ursuline dances where they are outnumbered by boys from St. Mark’s and Jesuit.

Compared to their counterparts at these schools, Cistercian students enjoy fewer built-in relationships with the girls. Not only are there fewer institutionally co-ed events (e.g., St. Mark’s Spirit Night), many Cistercian students don’t even reside near North Dallas. As a result, they don’t have the opportunity to meet Hockaday and Ursuline girls at grade school or church.

Finally, Cistercian students are generally more economically diverse, which can sometimes create a sense of awkwardness.

And through the seventies and most of the eighties, Cistercian students received little help from their school.

“You spend eight years separated from girls,” said Gary Lucido ’73, “and then you’re supposed to feel comfortable around them? Heck, if it weren’t for watching my daughters grow up I still wouldn’t know how girls think. And my wife is still a mystery.”

Lucido pointed out another handicap.

“How are a bunch of Hungarian immigrants supposed to teach [American] kids about assimilating into society?” asked Lucido.

While the Hungarians were leaving the social development of the boys to their parents, communication between students and parents in the seventies and early eighties was hindered by the “generation gap.” The boys often were left to revel or to unravel “doing their own thing.”

“Cistercian helped make me self-confident in my personal values and priorities,” said Christopher Kribs Zaleta ’85, “but provided few opportunities for the kind of social development crucial in adolescence.”

Nevertheless, Cistercian students survived. And some believe that Cistercian’s quirks made up for a few of its shortcomings.

“My classmates at Cistercian lived all over the Metroplex,” said Clark Hicks ’90, “which meant I had to socialize with their friends when I went to their houses. When we had parties on the weekends in the late eighties there were kids from all different schools at our parties, both public and private. That made it a lot easier to meet people at college.”

“**I** AM GOING TO BE YOUR SPIRITUAL FATHER,” Fr. Paul told his class of First Formers in the fall of 1997. “And you will be spiritual brothers.” As form master to the Class of 2005, Fr. Paul has never wavered from this message. Over the years, a few students from the class have left Cistercian. No matter what the reason, Fr. Paul always invites them back for special occasions.

“I made a commitment that I’d be here for them, whether they stayed at Cistercian or not. Inviting former classmates back regular-

ly also sends a message to the remaining members of the class — your acceptance by me is unconditional. After all, a father can’t disown a son because he makes bad grades.”

Fr. Peter selects form masters based on their ability to lead spiritually, academically, and socially. During the course of weekly form master periods over a class’ eight years at Cistercian, there are countless opportunities for form masters to discuss with the boys issues ranging from morality to dress codes.

Every form master seeks to instill a sense of acceptance among the classmates. The Form IV confirmation retreat has sometimes served as an important occasion for fostering this acceptance. Near the end of the retreat, students are sometimes asked to make statements about the role that their faith has played in their lives.

“The boys opened up with their most personal struggles,” remembered Fr. Paul of the Form IV retreat for the Class of ’05. “Their willingness to talk honestly about themselves at the confirmation retreat — especially at a vulnerable stage like age 13 or 14 — went a long way in reinforcing their commitment to accept one another.”

While Cistercian form masters enjoy a great deal of freedom in the way they lead, many of their messages touch on class unity, virtues, and postponing exposure to temptations.

“We are taking the boys through a very dangerous period,” Fr. Peter said. “Our job is to instill values, to help them realize what it means to make it to manhood. We want to save them from all the false advertising, to help them postpone some of the difficult choices, and to treat their classmates and girls with respect.”

The form master system, along with a steady diet of theology courses, seems to make a difference.

Fr. Roch Kereszty and Fr. Paul handle the theology classes during high school and they frequently address social issues.

“The natural tendency of the adolescent is to look into a mirror constantly,” counsels Fr. Roch in his literature on teenage dating. “He worries about the impression he makes on others, worries about his own success in school, athletics, and social life. He longs for recognition, honor, influence, and prestige. It takes him some time and reflection to discover that the only lasting satisfaction comes from loving and being loved.”

“The first step in learning to love” he insists, “is through friendships with members of the same sex. If an adolescent boy cannot communicate with his peers, if he cannot be his true self with them, if he cannot be sincerely interested in them, he will not be able to develop a good friendship with a girl either.”

“Young men,” Fr. Roch concludes, “will become successful lovers only when they have strong self-esteem.”

“IN MY EXPERIENCE, MORALS ARE TAUGHT MOSTLY BY EXAMPLE,” suggested Niculin Herz ’06, when Jackie Greenfield asked her junior English class how Cistercian builds boys’ characters. “Young people assimilate the values of those they respect and love. It is no different with the teachers and coaches here at Cistercian. Our teachers are firm, committed, upstanding men and women who strive to uphold the morals the school hopes to instill in its students, and, by their example, teach the students the strength of those morals.”

Mrs. Greenfield, like many Cistercian teachers, tries to bring those lessons to life in her classes. She calls her junior English class, “The Imperative of Courage in an Incongruent World.”

“A good piece of writing changes you, just like any other creative work,” Patrick Romeo ’06 told Mrs. Greenfield. “We are at a sensitive point in life when we’re looking for influences to help define ourselves. Consciously or subconsciously, we are building our personas, our code of ethics, our philosophy of life.”

“Cistercian students,” he added, “are — sometimes unwillingly and unknowingly — imbued with virtue during their years at Cistercian.”

“I learned a lot about accepting other people,” Josh Campbell ’02 said recently from his dorm room at Princeton, “from Fr. Roch and Fr. Paul in theology classes. Vijay Pattisapu ’02 would frequently ask very pointed questions in those classes. The priests would always take the time, either in class or outside of class, to answer his questions and to present their point of view in a loving, kind way. They demonstrated a lot of understanding of his Hindu faith while they remained firm in their beliefs.”

“That really served as a model for me,” he added. “And it helped me a lot when I arrived at Princeton and discovered my roommate was a Hindu.”

“A lot of staying away from bad things comes from your upbringing,” Campbell said.

“That’s what makes Bob Haaser’s role as director of admissions so important,” emphasized Fr. Peter. “We have to have families who are on board with our program. It’s a partnership.”

Campbell served as a role model himself while at Cistercian. In addition to being a top student and star athlete, he chose not to drink.

“I didn’t preach about it but I tried to demonstrate that you can have plenty of fun without drinking,” he said. The example of smart, athletic, sociable guys like Campbell and classmates like Wheeler Sparks ’02 (who dry-pledged Fiji at Washington & Lee), showed others it was possible to fight the peer pressure to drink.

THE CARS CARRYING NEARLY 300 FRESHMAN COEDS TO Cistercian this late August evening had traffic backed up on Highway 114. As the vehicles crept into view of the Middle School, the girls inside began chattering and pointing at the Hawaiian decorations and the boys assembled at the foot of the stairs. Finally, a Cistercian dad opened the car door and a boy stepped up to take the arm of each girl and escort her up the stairs, past the colored lights, the Tiki torches, and the cardboard sail boat.

Inside, the lunchroom was transformed. The ceiling was covered by beach towels and the stark white columns were wrapped in Christmas lights and topped with green paper palm leaves. Beach balls hung everywhere. Casino tables were manned by dads on the patio just outside the lunchroom.

The boys’ bathroom was converted into the ladies’ room for the night and featured lots of free make-up and beauty accessories. The urinals were draped with grass skirts and topped with Tiki masks.

With such extravagant decorations and creative flourishes, it’s no wonder that the Freshman Mixer — first instituted by parents in the early eighties — has developed a wonderful reputation despite a girl-to-boy ratio of over six to one (nearly 300 girls to 46 boys this year).

In several respects, the Mixer makes an appropriate way to introduce freshman girls to the Cistercian social scene, capturing in one event both the good and the bad.

They discover that Cistercian boys are bright, polite, witty, and attentive. Their parties are fun and entertaining. And it’s a warm, close-knit community.

On the other hand, they find there are only so many Cistercian boys to go around (not all of whom are anxious for female companionship as this point in their lives) and only a few formal social occasions during which to meet them. It can be daunting for many of the

girls, initially handing the advantage to the boldest among them who are angling for an invitation to the Homecoming dance.

For those Cistercian boys who had been wondering how they were going to find a Homecoming date, these advances may be welcomed. Later, however, they occasionally find that the girls were more interested in attending the dance than in accompanying them.

The Freshman Mixer also paints for the boys an unrealistic image of the social road ahead. Never again will they enjoy such fantastic odds in which girls willingly accept any invitation to dance. It’s no wonder that at the Ursuline and Hockaday dances, where the ratio of girls to boys is more equal, Cistercian boys do not turn out in large numbers.

“The Freshman Mixer is a great party,” said Susan Smith, a class mom of this year’s freshman class at Hockaday. “But I wish they would split it up and hold several different parties to improve the ratio of girls to boys.”

The monks won’t have it though, believing that the schedule of social events remains sufficiently crowded as it is. And they have a point.

On the heels of the Freshman Mixer comes a series of after-game parties. Then there’s the Upper School volleyball tournament (a weekend event in which girls are welcome), Homecoming, more after-game parties, and then

the Down Syndrome Guild Dance. And that takes us through just the first weekend in November.

“MY DAUGHTER CHENEY (AN URSULINE SENIOR) APPRECIATES THE independent mindset of the Cistercian boys,” said Susan Friedman, mother of Bayard Friedman ’03 and Kerr Friedman ’07. “They don’t have a herd mentality. She senses a little more maturity and respect for one another.”

“We may not be as wild and crazy as some guys,” McBride admitted, “but we still have fun and we know the limits of what is acceptable and what isn’t.”

“They’re shyer in social situations,” said a Hockaday junior who asked not to be identified. “But they are a lot more courteous.”

“The Hockaday girls who date the Cistercian boys are not the cheerleader type,” she added. “They are girls who don’t care about the whole popularity scene and social structure. They just do their own thing.”

In size alone, the Cistercian social landscape varies greatly from single-sex counterparts like St. Mark’s, Jesuit, Hockaday, and Ursuline. While Cistercian can stage its Homecoming on campus, Jesuit’s size forces such all-school events into large, impersonal facilities. The numbers and venue change the complexion of the events and complicate their supervision.

Cistercian parties remain fairly intimate; non-Cistercian boys are prohibited.

“Our parties promote an insular feeling,” suggested Peter Saliga, Fr. Paul’s predecessor as student government sponsor and now form master of the Class of ’11. “College fraternities are insular also. It’s a communal life that forms who they are — a tight-knit group. It seems exclusive because it is.”

“By developing a tight community, you help ward off trouble.” And, Saliga added, “Insulation creates warmth.”

Within the community, few signs of social ineptitude arise. But like a fish out of water, Cistercian boys may flounder in larger social scenes (e.g., Ursuline and Hockaday dances).

“The insulation might be a source of some awkwardness,”

The Freshman Mixer has developed a wonderful reputation despite a girl-to-boy ratio of over six to one.

Saliga admitted.

"I'd say that as a Cistercian student, my social awkwardness rated at best a 3 (on a scale of one to 10)," said Austin Murrey '01, who's in his junior year at University of the South (Sewanee).

"I definitely did not like the parties and crowds that so often came with high school gatherings. But I don't think that it negatively impacted my social life in college at all. I have a fairly large group of close friends and became president of my (admittedly small) fraternity my sophomore year in college.

"Cistercian prepared me best," Murrey remarked, "by allowing me to be comfortable with myself, so I didn't feel pressured to be someone I wasn't at college just so I would 'fit in.'"

"Cistercian has given me too much confidence to feel socially awkward these days," said Michael Keljo '01, a junior at the University of Pennsylvania. "I am confident about who I am and where I come from, what I value and what I don't. I've seen a lot of people struggle with who they are in college, but have found that for me personally, Cistercian has given me an enormous sense of self."

Naturally, the social patterns vary widely from class to class, just as the socially awkward quotient varies from individual to individual.

"In Donovan's (Class of '97) and Caleb's (Class of '00) groups, no one girl school dominated," said Polly Campbell, who has observed the Cistercian social scene through the lives of her five sons. "But in Josh's class ('02), seven of the boys dated girls from Highland Park High School. Jordan's class ('04) primarily socialized with Hockaday girls. Chase's class ('07) is still defining itself."

"Sometimes they socialize in groups without really pairing up as girlfriend and boyfriend, sometimes they pair up within the groups, and sometimes there is no pattern at all," she said.

"It's amazing," she emphasized, "how a strong group can direct the social movement of the entire class."

HIS IDEAS FOR A HOMECOMING COSTUME – ARGUABLY THE toughest sartorial decision a Cistercian upperclassman makes every year – centered first on a cartoon character, then gravitated toward something more iconic. In every incarnation, Robbie Earle clearly intended to trumpet himself and his date. This year's Homecoming, his last as a Cistercian student, held special significance; the costume needed to reflect the import of the occasion.

"We decided yellow would be the most striking color," Earle recalled, reconstructing his thought process. The clincher came when girlfriend Mandy Stafford, a sophomore at Martin High School in Arlington, searched the Internet for "eighties cartoon characters." Why hadn't they thought of this before? The couple would go as the king and queen of eighties video gaming, Pac-Man and Mrs. Pac-Man (yes, a cartoon spin-off was created from the video game).

While Stafford's mom measured and sewed, Earle made the requisite trips to the material store. Executing all the details (including a mouth for Pac-Man that could munch like that of the video game character) took time. In fact, Mrs. Stafford needed nearly 12 hours to complete each one; the finishing touches were added the evening of Homecoming as Earle's classmates enjoyed their Homecoming dinner.

Arriving late, Pac-Man and Mrs. Pac-Man entered Homecoming 2004 through the central doors of the west (old) gym. Rather than passing the weight room, locker rooms, and coaches' offices, they found themselves traveling through the tunnel from *Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade*.

Upstairs in the lobby between the two gyms, Fr. Gregory

Schweers, dressed as an East German border guard, stamped tickets alongside tables covered with refreshments.

As Pac-Man and Mrs. Pac-Man entered the gym, ET hung above them riding his bicycle. The Berlin Wall, the dropped ceiling, and the black wall coverings removed any hint of the gym's familiar confines. On the far side of the Berlin Wall, partygoers could enjoy a variety of video games (including a version of Dance Dance Revolution), play black jack at the casino tables, recline on bean bags in the "Eighties Lounge" while watching eighties movies (e.g., *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), or pose for a formal picture in the photo booth.

On the near side, the lighted dance floor remained jammed all night with students dressed as likenesses from the eighties, like Mr. T, Mario, the Blues Brothers, the Wild and Crazy Guys from *Saturday Night Live*, Blondie, and Cindy Lauper.

"I couldn't even imagine," raved Scott Novak, who was dressed as one of the Ghostbusters. "It was insane, much more than I expected. My date had never been to a Cistercian Homecoming party. She couldn't believe it."

But of all the costumes, Pac-Man and Mrs. Pac-Man took the cake.

"People we didn't even know kept coming up to us," said Earle. "A lot of people took our picture."

"Lots of people would charge Robbie," Stafford said. "They'd open up the mouth on his costume and make him chomp on them. Everybody thought the costumes were awesome."

And now, eight months after first becoming acquainted with the Cistercian community, Stafford felt like one of the family.

HOMECOM



Earle, like any other teen, understood the importance of this acceptance. In fact, her acceptance seemed almost more important to him.

"My classmates have embraced her," Earle said. "It's like they're saying, 'Hey Robbie, any friend of yours is *automatically* a friend of ours.'"

TODAY'S CISTERCIAN STUDENTS DON'T SEEM TO CARE WHETHER they're labeled socially awkward. It certainly does not offend them. They acknowledge they have had their awkward moments and recognize some such moments may lie in their future. They understand social awkwardness can be chalked up to growing up.

They appreciate Cistercian's social scene, one that appears to have improved a little every year since the early nineties, tweaked by caring administrators, enthusiastic parents, and bright young men. Everyone appears happy with the results.

Attendance at the Homecoming dance has grown to include nearly 100 percent of the students in the Upper School. Freshmen began attending in large numbers in the mid-nineties. A special freshman Homecoming dinner was instituted at a parent's home to give them a chance to learn

"A home football game at Cistercian today brings hundreds of young ladies. [In 1977] we had ... four to five female prospects in the audience."

— Tom Stimson '78

without the things that go on at other parties."

While in the eighties, the "cool" group may have left early, 21st century Cistercian students stay, fostering class harmony and harmony between classes. The harmony extends even beyond that.

"These parties create the kind of atmosphere in which guys are willing to make small talk with teachers," Novinski remarked. "It's a real positive phenomenon because our role is to form the whole person, academically, morally, athletically, and socially. At a party 15-20 years ago, the boys would have run from a teacher."

"Another very nice aspect of our parties is that girls' parents trust us and are comfortable letting their daughters attend Cistercian parties," McBride said.

More and more girls are finding that the Cistercian community presents a viable social option, even if they aren't dating a particular Cistercian boy. Many girls come to the games and parties to enjoy the warm, low-pressure atmosphere.

"A home football game at Cistercian today brings hundreds of young ladies in what can only be described as a teeming throng," marveled Tom Stimson '78, who visited recently.

Things have evolved a lot since the seventies when, as Stimson pointed out, "we had maybe six cheerleaders and another four to five female prospects in the audience (okay, they were someone's sisters or cousins but fair game under the circumstances).

"Today there are more cheerleaders on the field than we had football players in 1978," he added.

Things also have evolved a lot for members of the Class of 2005 during their four years in Upper School.

"By your junior and senior year, the whole social experience starts to make more sense," Earle pointed out.

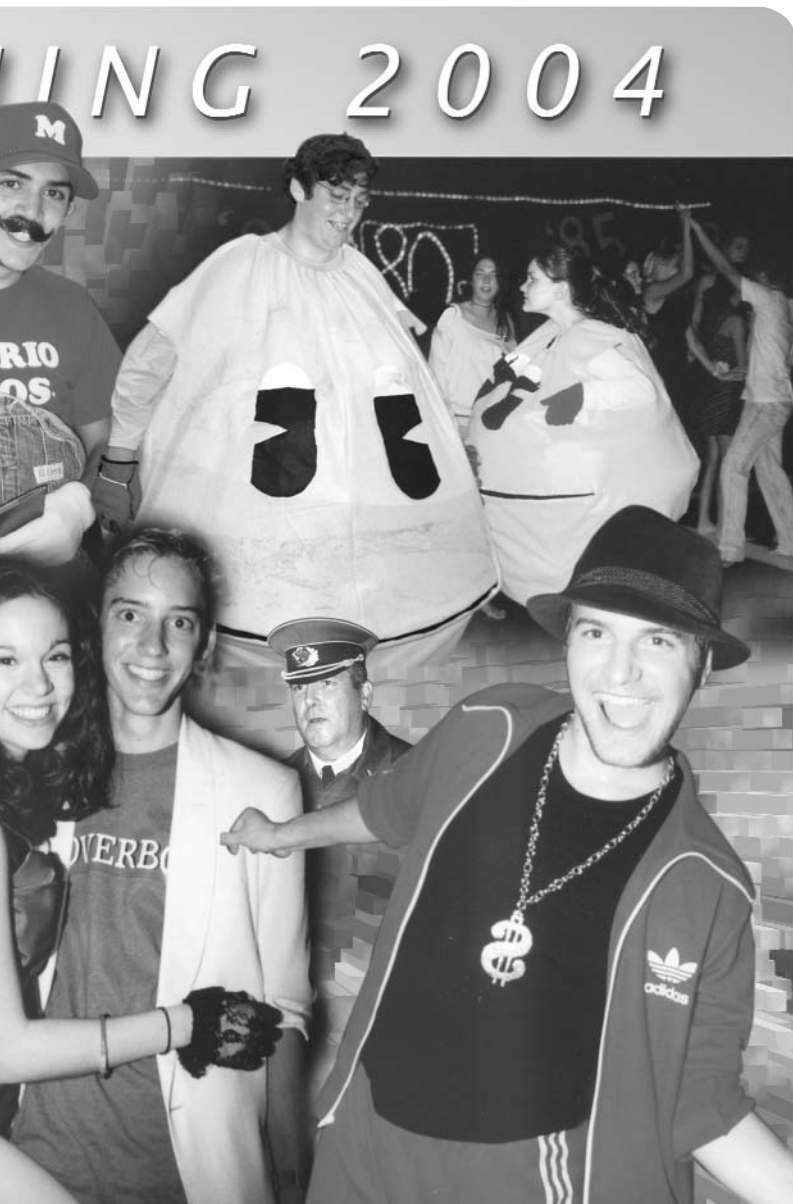
"This year's Homecoming was great," he said. "My date really liked me this time."

"At larger schools," said his girlfriend Stafford, "everyone learns how not to appear socially awkward.

"The Cistercian boys have significantly more genuine personalities," she suggested. "Once you get to know them, you know who they really are.

"I love that about them."

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Cloud of witnesses

A brush with death appears to have strengthened Fr. Henry Marton's love for people and his resolve to touch them.

By Tom Pruitt

November 1, All Saints Day, is a powerful reminder that the Christian walk of faith is a community affair, that we are never alone in the pilgrimage we have undertaken; our voyage is, in fact, overseen and supported by the vast multitudes of the faithful who have gone before us and whose collective light, like the stars in the vast dome of heaven, now shine down upon us and illumine our way, providing that “cloud of witnesses” promised in Scripture.

November 1 also happened to be the 79th birthday of Fr. Henry Marton, whose career at Cistercian began when he took on his first class in 1964, continued without interruption through the graduation of his fourth class in 1996, and, though his declining health prevented a full-time commitment after that, remained with the school through the spring of 2004. Then in the summer of 2004, Fr. Henry's health, already precarious due to the combined effects of Addison's and Parkinson's diseases, took a serious turn for the worse. While in rehab after undergoing surgery to insert a steel rod to mend an arm broken in a bad fall, Fr. Henry began to experience a persistent nausea which curtailed his desire to eat and drink. At the same time, he began to have greater difficulty swallowing. He was taken from rehab back to the hospital where for several weeks, unable to eat, hydrate, or take the necessary medications, he lay near death.

Without some significant intervention, divine or otherwise, even his physicians held out little hope of recovery. “Though we began to feed him through an IV, we knew that was only a temporary solution. A final decision would have to be made either to insert a feeding tube or to bring him home, make him comfortable, and let him go,” said Dr. Sam Listi (father of Tony Listi '05), one of the doctors handling Fr. Henry's case. Once Abbot Denis had returned from Rome and had had a chance to confer with the doctors as well as with his prior, Fr. Peter Verhalen '73, and Fr. Henry's brother, Fr. Bernard Marton, the Abbot was ready to discuss the options with Fr. Henry. “I went over early the morning of the Abbot's visit,” Listi remembers, “in order to make sure Fr. Henry clearly understood what those options were. His mind was very clear, even though his body was so weak he found it difficult to move. Fr. Bernard had told him the night before that the Abbot was coming to see him; it felt like doom descending. ‘The angels are not ready for me,’ he remarked in a whisper. ‘I don't feel like I'm dying; I want to live.’ The Abbot agreed, the feeding tube was placed, and his recovery began immediately. He was soon back in rehab, intent now on mak-

ing a full recovery and getting back home to the Abbey.

Fr. Bernard was at his side throughout most of this ordeal, agonizing each day over what to do next but never quite believing that his older brother's time was up. Once the feeding tube was placed and Fr. Henry began his swift recovery, Fr. Bernard cheered his daily progress and became awestruck at the effect his brother, who only several weeks before had lain near death, was now having on both the therapists and fellow residents at the rehabilitation center in Irving where he had gone to live. He still resides there — or perhaps more accurately presides, judging by his effect upon the constant stream of visitors who come by both to check on him and get their daily dose of wisdom — perhaps even a full-fledged homily — and good humor, as well as from the generous, almost courtly manner Fr. Henry manifests toward his fellow residents, waving to each one as he wheels past them on the way from his room to the dining hall and back, occasionally stopping to speak and hold a hand.

He even requested that one of his regular visitors, who had come to take him on a stroll, stop his wheelchair so that he could slowly reach down to retrieve a resident's loose slipper and then to reposition it on her foot. As he began to wheel away, the resident loudly proclaimed that the other one was probably about to fall off; he responded genteelly that when it did, he'd be back to fix it.

The staff of the facility hold Fr. Henry in high regard, both as a patient and as a man. All are amazed by his tenacity and resolve to get better. “He is very independent,” remarked Theresa Duru, one of his morning aides. “He does for himself very well. He's one of the residents we all want to watch over, to care for.”

Another aide, Betty Iwuagwu, was eager to talk about this remarkable man. “He has such great respect for himself, such dignity. He always wants to improve, to get better, and he always appreciates whatever you do for him; any little thing gets a compliment.”

Both Duru and Iwuagwu turned their thoughts quickly to his character. “I know Fr. Marton is a priest,” Duru, a native Nigerian, remarked, “but there's a difference between a man's reputation and his character. Fr. Marton, I will say, is a true man of God; he's awesome.”

“He's out there; he'd give you his heart if you asked him. He's just a good man,” Iwuagwu reflected, then added with a smile, “I'm always asking him to pray for me and I know he does. Fr. Marton doesn't see the outside — black or white, rich or poor; he just looks straight into the heart of a person.”

Betty Jenkins, a restorative aide, has spent a great deal of time with Fr. Henry on his road to recovery and has become quite

attached to him. “Fr. Marton is such a great example of the saying ‘It’s all a matter of the mind’; he just won’t give up. What has happened in his case, as close to death as he was, is truly a miracle!” Jenkins went on to say that she always tries to find time during her shift to take Fr. Henry for a stroll, through the garden and out onto the porch. On one such occasion, during the recent spell of near-perfect fall weather, as they sat on the porch, Jenkins remarked, “Just think Father, you were almost dead — and now look at you!”

Fr. Henry paused before replying, “I know now I still have a purpose here. I still have things to do.”

Fr. Bernard has remarked that this illness, despite all its debilitating suffering, has actually purified Fr. Henry’s spirit. “He’s even more loving than he was, more openly affectionate, and is always ready to preach the Gospel to anyone who comes to see him. He’s become almost child-like.” Never comfortable with a compliment, he always deflects it; it is merely God working through him. And perhaps he’s right: all who come into contact with him, feel the presence of a certain holiness. After one visit Matt Hawkins ‘88, a member of Fr. Henry’s third class, remarked, “I felt like I was in the presence of someone truly holy; I have never experienced that feeling before in my life.”

Dana McGrath, mother of Conor McGrath ’10 and Sean McGrath ’12, met Fr. Henry for the first time in mid-June, 2004, but quickly became one of his regular visitors. “Since meeting Fr. Henry I have continued weekly visits and feel so blessed to have made such a friend. When I think of Fr. Henry I recall how he closes his letters. While Fr. Bernard was away in Hungary this summer, Fr. Henry would dictate letters to me and I would send them via email. He would always conclude, ‘With God’s blessing, much love, and good health, I kiss everyone.’ I cannot think of anything that, for me, more fully captures the essence of Fr. Henry.”

His voice may falter, his energy may desert him, his spirits occasionally may sink, but in the presence of a visitor, he is always the gentleman. As he is wheeled about, he often reaches out to pat the hand of a forlorn patient. One day as he passed a female resident, she caught his eye and said something about dancing. Fr. Henry said he didn’t know much about dancing, except for a few Hungarian folk dances. “Honey, that don’t matter,” the resident rejoined. “You bring the music and we’ll dance!”

For some, contact has deepened into an unshakeable devotion. As Phyllis Carr (mother of Alex Carr ’94 and Phillip Carr ’99) began her inquiry into the Catholic faith through RCIA, she asked Fr. Henry if he would meet with her just to answer a few questions. “I was just the sideshow,” he remarked with characteristic humility; “the real work was done in her RCIA program. I may have helped a little, but not much.”

But from her perspective, he is a “holy, humble, humorous, faith-filled gentle man. He didn’t know me and I didn’t know him when

he agreed to teach me about the faith. I made it clear that I was just *inquiring* and he told me he would accompany me on the journey no matter where it led. We met weekly, usually on Wednesdays. I called it Wednesdays with Henry (a la *Tuesdays with Morrie*), although not to his face.”

In a further parallel with Morrie’s life, during that year, Fr. Henry’s health declined. Yet, he remained both steadfast in his commitment to Carr and articulate, nay winsome, in his presentation of the faith. (Carr once asked him about the priesthood, a concept quite foreign to her, which at the time she found to be full of “deprivation, duty, and drudgery.” “For some,” Fr. Henry replied, “it appears as a door closing, but for me, when I made my solemn profession, it was like a door opening.”)

Perhaps most telling of his character during this period of his illness, he rarely lost his sense of humor. Carr remembers one incident especially well: “Once when he was in the ER, we were worried that there was something very seriously wrong. He had passed out and when he came to, I said, ‘Well, at least you’re not dead.’ He replied, ‘Apparently.’”

Though he certainly has his ups and downs, Fr. Henry is usually appreciative of his sufferings; he knows that God continues to teach and to test him. In his struggles with his illness, however, he sometimes would fall into depression and see his suffering as a punishment for his being a bad person which for him specifically meant both not allowing people to get close to him and being too reticent in showing how much he cared. In June of this year, when he appeared to be dying, he had a profound religious experience which he still recalls most vividly and which animates him with an urgent desire to enjoy each person who visits him each day. He has consciously

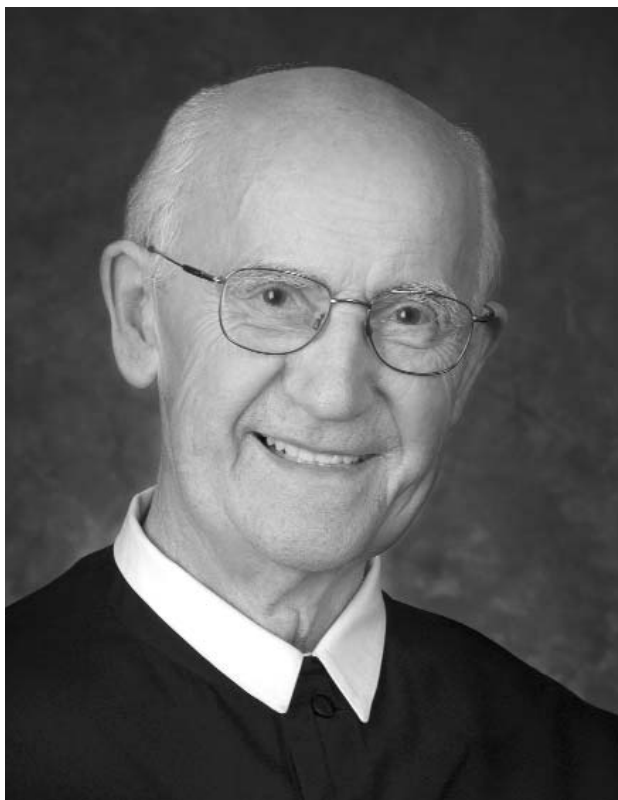
addressed his self-proclaimed “fault” of reticence and now proclaims to everyone who visits that he loves them and further that love is now the most important ingredient of his life.

With a child-like enthusiasm, he relishes any opportunity which presents itself to touch the life of his visitors, to express his gratitude and his love for each of them, to hold their hands and give them a hug goodbye, and to leave them with an image of the Gospel, preached either in words or through the graceful gestures of his long, slender fingers, the dancing laughter of his eyes, the serenity of his voice.

His focus, now that he has grown strong enough to be weaned from the feeding tube, is on going home — home to the Abbey and even to Hungary. Such a desire presents a host of complications, perhaps insurmountable, but one thing is for sure. Fr. Henry Marton is on his way home and ultimately will be brought into that realm of light inaccessible and of bliss unfathomable and into the company of saints innumerable.

He will fit right in.

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DANCING LAUGHTER OF HIS EYES Fr. Henry Marton as captured by Jim Reisch in November 2004.

Hawks grounded in thrilling SPC-II title game

On a chilly and damp November night at Hawk Field, Cistercian battled All-Saints for the SPC Division II championship for three-and-half hours, and three overtimes.

All-Saints brought a record of 9-1 (losing only to TAPPS powerhouse Dallas Christian) and a scoring average of 41.5 points a game.

Cistercian, ranked fourth or fifth in pre-season rankings, had clawed its way into the SPC-II championship with a 7-3 record (6-1 in conference) by willing its way past opponents. The Hawks scored with 25 seconds remaining to beat TMI and needed overtime to defeat Trinity Valley. (Cistercian also lost a close one with Pantego Christian.) Then, Cistercian edged ESD on the foot of **Matthew Abola '07**, 6-0.

By employing one of Cistercian's largest and deepest squads in history — only two boys played both ways consistently — Coach McCarthy's Hawks came into the game relatively healthy and hoping they could avenge the team's 41-21 loss to the Saints earlier in the season.

All-Saints star running back Christopher Douglas ran well in regulation, but made it into the end zone only once.

The Hawks offense sputtered, but managed to tie the score on a 10-yard run by **Matthew Chee-Awai '05** in the fourth quarter.

In overtime, the Hawks offense came alive.

The Hawks scored on a 5-yard keeper by quarterback **Chris McGowan '06** and on a 10-yard pass to Abola on a crossing route. All-Saints, however, was scoring too.

In the third OT, teams are required to attempt two-point conversions after scoring.

Things looked bleak on the Hawks' next



Photo by Vincent Zimmern '06

ON THE RUN Chris McGowan '06 scrambles during the Hawks' 20-0 Homecoming win over St. Andrews. McGowan threw for 1,157 yards and eight touchdowns in 2004.

possession, facing a third-and-17 from the 32. But McGowan hit **Kerr Freidman '07** with a touchdown strike. The two-point conversion attempt failed, leaving the Hawks with the momentum, but vulnerable.

When All-Saints scored a TD on their possession, the SPC-II crown came down to one play, and a split-second decision.

As Douglas swept to his right, he was hit by Hawks who were pulling him down when he flung the ball into the end zone to receiver Danny Davison, who caught the ball and buried Cistercian's SPC-II title hopes, 29-27.

"I told them to keep their heads up," McCarthy said. "I reminded them of how far they'd come, and that they'd stayed with the best team in the conference."

spc honors

All Conference

Tony Johnston '05, Sean Moroney '05, Mathew Chee-Awai '05, Chris McGowan '06, and Chase Campbell '07.

Honorable Mention

Pete Dale '05, Robbie Earle '05, Weston McBride '05, Scott Novak '05, Sam Bowler '06, George Morgan '06, Will Murchsion '06, Jere Thompson '06, Mathew Abola '07, Carlton Cornelius '07, and Kerr Friedman '07.



Photo by Mrs. Sabine Zimmern

McCain '02 leads enthusiastic, young cross country squad

A voluminous squad of 45 cross country runners tore up the roads around Cistercian this fall. Under the watchful eyes of **Barry A. McCain '02** and **Nick Heyne '99**, the team participated in five meets, often facing public schools.

At the Hillcrest Invitational, which included 5-A, 4-A, and 3-A-and-under divisions, Cistercian won first place in the 3-A group. The effort featured a second place finish by **Erik Tanner '07** (17 minutes, 44 seconds) and fifth-place finish by **David Pruitt '06** (18:24).

Coach McCain also was proud of the efforts by **Vincent Zimmern '06**, **James Hansell '06**, and **Paul Hedrick '06**, who finished 12th, 13th, and 14th.

"They worked well as a team and their improvement has been across the board together," McCain said. "They pushed each other to perform better."

At SPC, the Hawks placed 10th out 16 schools

Comprised almost entirely of underclassmen (and lots of them), the future for cross country looks bright.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN Hawk cross country runners (l-r): Vincent Zimmern '06, Nicholas Krug '06, and Travis LaMothe '06.

Grading myself on the socially awkward scale

“Hey Smokey, the next issue of *The Continuum* deals with the social life of Cistercian students,” David Stewart said.

Silence was my response.

“Smokey?”

“There was a social aspect?” I queried across 400 miles of fiber optics. To myself I thought, “Damn, I wonder if there was an elective for that?”



Afterthoughts

Smokey Briggs '84

“Well, there is now,” Stewart said. “As a matter of fact, at the last freshman mixer the ratio was something like 5-1 girls to guys.”

“At CPS? Where we went to school? The place with the mean guys with meter sticks and Latin books the size of watermelons? That CPS? Girls at a dance – not just the freshmen dressed up with coconut shells and hula skirts?”

“Yeah.”

I paused. Then I smiled knowing that some group of bright young men had actually

carried out The Plan.

The Plan was hatched by the 97.4 percent of the Class of '84 that did not have a girlfriend in 1981, '82, or '83.

The Plan consisted of stealing a school bus and tricking a bunch of gals from Ursuline, Hockaday or maybe an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting to get on.

Of course, the bus ride would then end at the steps of the Cistercian gym where our unsuspecting captives would have no choice but to attend the dance.

For once we would have a dance that was not reminiscent of a Jack London scene where a half-dozen well-groomed city dogs are suddenly surrounded by a pack of starved huskies with no silly taboos about cannibalism.

Of course, if we had pulled it off we would have probably failed at step two – conversation with the opposite sex.

We never pulled it off. Mr. Walter caught us trying to hotwire the bus and that was that.

But, obviously someone has pulled it off.

Cistercian guys dancing with girls. The idea left me with a warm glow as though I could live vicariously through these young men who were actually accomplishing something we had only dreamed of.

“Wow,” I said aloud.

“Yeah,” Stewart said, as though he too was tripping down the sidewalks of a very dateless memory lane.

“How?”

“Fr. Peter and the parents,” Stewart said.

“I always loved Fr. Peter,” I said. “He’s the man.”

“Well, good luck on the column,” David said, dragging me back to the reality that I had agreed to write an occasional column for *The Continuum*.

“I’ll send you some of the responses we got from alums to get the old juices flowing,” he said before he hung up.

The responses were to these questions:

- Describe the ways in which Cistercian impacted your social persona.
- How did you adjust to college social life?
- How would you grade yourself on the socially awkward scale while you were at Cistercian? (1 being the most socially awkward,

10 being the least socially awkward)? Why?

He hung up before I could ask what a social persona is so I’ll skip that one.

How did I adjust to college social life?

I didn’t. I enlisted in the Marine Reserves. Four years of rigorous training without so much as a girl in sight just seemed to beg for at least another year of fun.

But, hey, I fit in great at Camp Pendleton.

Cistercian completely prepared me for the enlisted men’s club scene where 500 19-year-old guys spent Saturday night drinking beer and making up lies about “this one time, I dated this girl....”

How would I grade myself on the socially awkward scale?

Does the inability to speak when confronted by a member of the opposite sex mean I was socially awkward?

I guess the fact that there were four of us trying to talk to the same girl did not help.

But, even for a Cistercian guy, I was pretty grim.

The year I spent at MacArthur High in Irving was not any better and there were plenty of girls there. Couldn’t speak a word to them.

I don’t guess I got a lot better at it as time went on.

When the most beautiful woman I have ever met asked me if I could sharpen her pocket knife (I was hanging out on the rifle range at UTA stroping my blade on the sharpening steel all cool guys carry) I answered, “Uh, yeah, sure.”

I guess social skills are not everything. We got married two years later (and I am usually in trouble because the kitchen knives are dull as bats).

Honestly, though, Cistercian did not leave me a socially awkward reject. I was already there when I pulled my ever-so-sexy motor scooter up to the Abbey the first time.

I do not think four years at the Playboy Mansion could have fixed that.

What Cistercian did do, specifically my classmates, was give me a home. I’m sure it was not so tough for the truly gifted guys in my class, but for me CPS tested me as only the Marines have since.

For four years I was a member of an elite, and very decent family of guys who were probably all a little too proud, too intelligent, too something, to be willing to do the things people do to fit in at many schools.

At CPS you did not have to fit in, and so you did.

That sounds like a line out of a Fr. Gregory philosophy class doesn’t it?

In which, I might add, I did not learn a single thing that helped in asking a girl out.

For me, CPS was cool.

That we had few encounters with the opposite sex was a small price to pay.

But, five-to-one?

Heck, even I might have hooked something with that many fish in the water.

Good fishing guys.

Smokey Briggs can be reached at smokey@pecos.net.

Editor’s note: The actual girls-to-boys ratio at the 2004 Freshman Mixer was six to one.

Tom Hillary's teen years

I was searching the Internet for information about my old Bellaire High School when I came across the special edition that *The Continuum* published for Tom Hillary. It touched me deeply.

Tom and I grew up together in Bellaire, Texas. He was a few years older than me, but the whole group of kids on the block used to play baseball almost everyday. Tom always was the chooser and the organizer of the games, and we all wanted to be on his team.

All of the things that were said about

him in the articles could just have easily applied to when we played sandlot baseball. He was the best athlete among us and probably the best all around athlete that Bellaire ever had. Yet, he was always respectful to

“The Hillary Legacy” can be accessed at www.cistercian.org/school/publications

even the least talented in our group. He was everyone's compassionate and respectful big brother.

I like to think that a lot of the qualities that he gave to his athletes [at Cistercian] were formed on that sandlot. Having fun, playing hard, playing fair, including everyone in the game, being respectful and cour-

teous, and having fun again is what I remember most about Tom.

Tom also coached us in pee-wee ball. At that time we would play in the mornings during the summer and the twelve-year-olds would coach teams made up of 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds.

My father and I used to go the Bellaire High School football games when I was in grade school and junior high to see Tom play. Talk about a quarterback — he could throw the ball at least 70 yards. He was great at basketball and better at baseball.

A special, special person and a wonderful man and mentor to others.

Everett M. Urech, Daleville, AL

“If anyone wishes to come after me ...”

Instead of abstract reflections, I would like to share with you part of my letter to an alumnus who has recently finished college and is wondering about the direction of his life. Here is his question:

The idea of “dying to myself” has come up in conversation a few times recently, and is finding its way into my thoughts and prayers. I don't really know what it means, and I've been apprehensive of embracing it because of its implications. I mean, does Christ really expect us to be fully dead to our own desires and inclinations? The implications of this are disturbing. In big decisions, when I have tried to ignore the longings of my heart in favor of “doing the right thing” or what I think might be God's will, I have ended up making things hard on myself.



On Prayer

Fr. Roch Kereszty

Our faith tells us that we are created in the image of the Triune God and called to

share in the love and joy that unites the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. This explains why our deepest desires are to love and to be loved. But original sin and personal sins have wounded our nature (not to the point of total depravity, though) so that without embracing the cross and without God's grace, we do not really know how to love and we often mistake possessive clinging or noble aloofness for love. The result is frustration and unhappiness.

To die with Christ to myself, then, means to die to this sinful, self-centered self (see Romans 6 and 2 Cor 4:10) so that already in this life we may begin to share in the life of the risen Christ. Thus, dying with Christ means actually the healing and coming to life of my original God-intended self and its enrichment so that I can love more and more with the very love of the Son of God himself. The cross both heals and elevates my wounded nature.

I think you know all this and you have lived it also to a great extent. But this still does not answer the concrete question about what to do with your life. I believe you should follow the deepest and purest desires of your inmost self, the desires that fill you with energy and enthusiasm. God speaks to us through these desires and calls us through them. If someone has no passion to be a doctor, a priest, a teacher a scientist or a businessman for that matter, he will not be very effective. But you may ask, where is the cross in all this? At every step along the road. If I want to follow my purest desires, I need to be available for a lot of renunciation, to choose one path and give up the rest, I need self-discipline, forgetting about the self and committing myself to serving people in one way or another and ultimately committing myself to God. Deep down you know that only by giving away yourself will you be happy. The question that only you can decide still remains, how and in what manner?

Fr. Roch Kereszty can be reached at fr-roch@cistercian.org.

calendar

December

- 18 Alumni Christmas Open House
- 20-31 Christmas Break

January

- 4 Alumni College Day
- 28 Moroney Award Dinner
- 29 Admissions testing

February

- 5 Admissions testing
- 17-19 BraveArt

March

- 6 Book Fair
- 21-28 Spring Break
- 28 Alumni Assoc./Booster Club Golf Tournament

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