

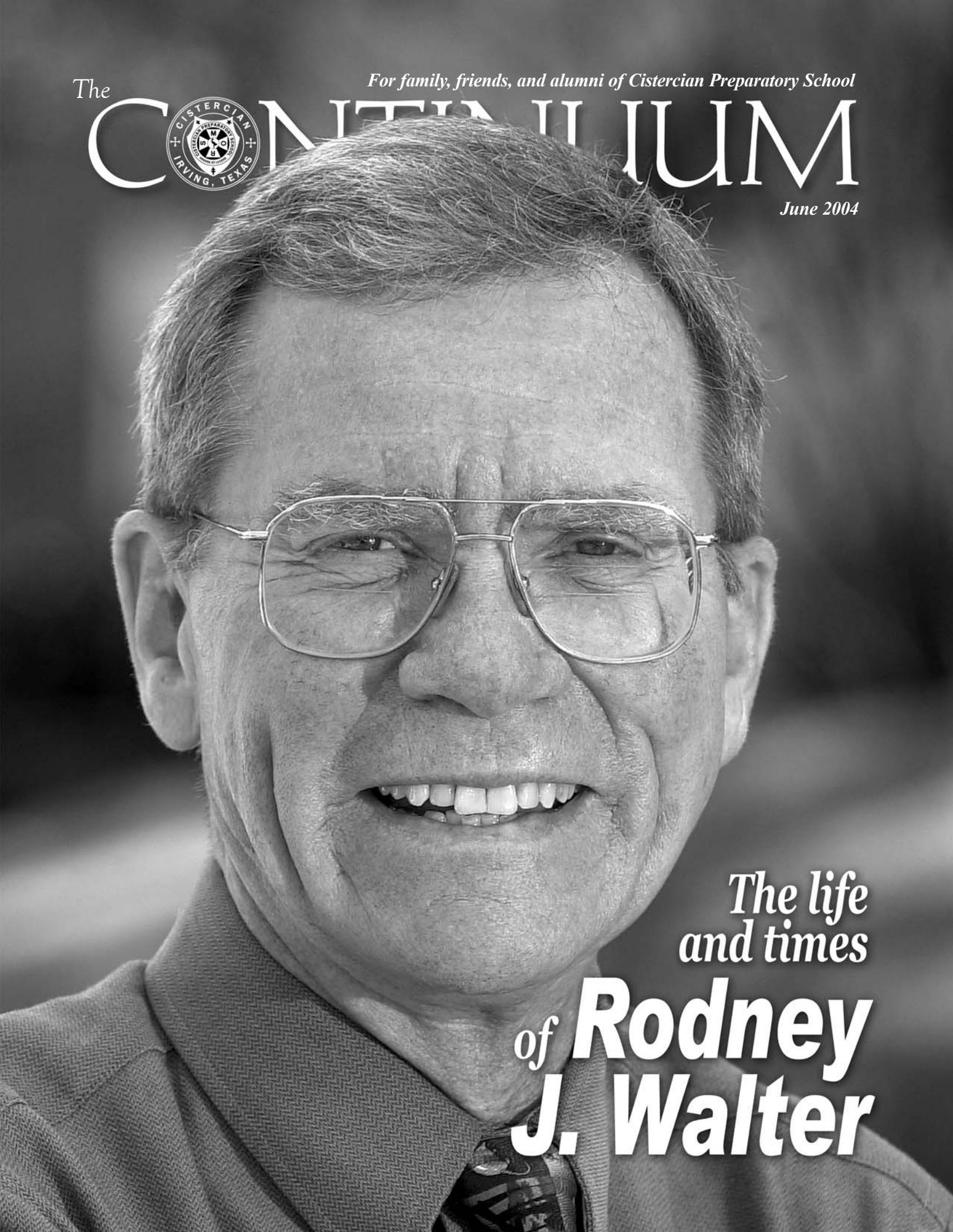
The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School



CONTINUUM

June 2004



*The life
and times*

of **Rodney
J. Walter**

Dear Cistercian Families, Friends, and Alumni,

Spring is traditionally a time for renewal. And this spring is certainly no exception for the monastery. By the time you receive this magazine we will have moved into the second fully renovated wing containing our new bedrooms and refectory. If you attended the fall Open House for the first wing, you saw the elegant and beautiful new design. **Gary Cunningham '72** and **Warren Andres '77** have not only replaced the outdated plumbing, electrical wiring, heat, and air conditioning systems but have also created living spaces that truly lift our spirits.

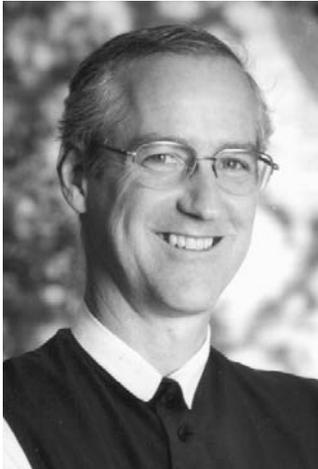


Photo by Jim Rensch

This summer we will complete the third phase, which will include a renovated sacristy, St. Bernard's chapel, recreation room, and novitiate. The remodeled third wing will have new rooms for the three young men who joined the monastery last August as well as several more rooms for future novices.

The renewal of the monastery is evident to all of us, monks and visitors alike. The new facilities make a huge difference in our lives. They also express our commitment to the future, and our confidence in that future. We plan to be here, growing and thriving, for another fifty years. The novices and junior monks bring new perspectives, new talents, and new devotion to the Cistercian life of prayer and work in community.

In this issue of *The Continuum* the feature articles look at a graduating senior, a middle-aged (sorry, Smokey!) alumnus, and a veteran teacher moving from his full-time role as one of the pillars of the administration to a part-time position as teacher. The School and the monastery both are healthy communities with their three generations. I hope that you will enjoy this issue of *The Continuum* and feel some of our joy in our community, renewing itself with such a sense of gratitude.



Fr. Peter Verhalen '73
Headmaster

CISTERCIAN
PREPARATORY
SCHOOL



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and Alumni Relations*

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Director of Athletics

Steve Rasch '80
*President, Cistercian
Alumni Association*

EDITORIAL STAFF

David Stewart '74
Editor & Art Director

Tom B. Pruitt
Copy Editor

Sally L. Cook
Assistant Copy Editor

Jim Reisch
Photography Editor

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Always ready to roll up his sleeves, Rodney Walter's 40 years of dedication, loyalty, and service have set the standard for all Cistercian teachers.

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In Middle School, Kramer Rice's career at Cistercian appeared near an end. Now, the sky's the limit.



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Smokey Briggs shares his West Texan's view on returning to the old school after 20 years.

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Cover photography: Jim Reisch

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.

The Catholic Foundation contributes to Abbey renovation

Thanks to a most generous grant from The Catholic Foundation, the third phase of the Abbey's extensive renovation can continue as scheduled. In April, the Abbey was granted \$70,000 for the renovation of rooms specifically designed for the three novices who joined the monastery last August. The Foundation's support of this essential remodeling project demonstrates its continued commitment to the Cistercian community.

REORGANIZATION

Staff attempts to fill the shoes of Mr. Walter

After 40 years, Mr. Rodney Walter will lighten his work schedule beginning next fall due to persistent back pain.

While the career of Rodney Walter bears celebrating (see our lead feature), his part-time status next year means his many duties will have to be shared.

"Now that we are trying to find people to take over for him, I am realizing the extent to which he just accumulated responsibilities and jobs," said **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73**.

Mr. Walter has served as administrative assistant since the mid-eighties when he began to assume a variety of roles.

He performed many of the functions of business manager (budgeting, health insurance, and retirement plans). He also served as facilities manager in addition to his duties as director of transportation.

"His jobs will be distributed among three veteran faculty and staff members — and that only covers the administrative jobs."

Tim Parker '90 will take over as facilities manager. Kati Ferenczi, who has been serving as the school bookkeeper, is assuming the larger role of business manager. Craig Sklar will serve as director of transportation.

"In his role as facilities manager, Rodney has looked at the school as his own home," said Fr. Peter.

"While Rodney is really irreplaceable," said Fr. Peter, "I think we have a team of people ready to do their best in living up to his example."

FAMILY GIVING

Planned giving: if there's a will, there's a way

Abbot Denis introduced the *Memorare* planned giving initiative at the Abbot's Circle Dinner in April.

The new program is designed to provide opportunities for present and future supporters to remember the Abbey and the School in their financial planning. The planned giving initiative aims to endow buildings, faculty chairs, and scholarships for both Prep School students and young Cistercian monks.

"The name," Fr. Denis told those attending the dinner at the Las Colinas

Country Club, "is taken from the first word and title of a famous prayer by St. Bernard to the Virgin Mary.

"It means, quite appropriately, 'Remember.'"

Abbot Denis recalled the gift of Dr. Claudius Mayer, an alumnus of the Cistercian school in Budapest, who bequeathed more than \$1 million to establish the first scholarship fund in the Prep School.

"Each year," he reflected,

"the memory of his legacy is perpetuated in the students whose education he has funded."

Contact your financial advisor or call the development office at Cistercian to investigate how to include Cistercian into your financial plans.

"Through the *Memorare Society*," the Abbot suggested, "we will only strengthen the ties that bind together this Cistercian family."

Its's a split decision for the Class of '04

Half the Cistercian seniors will matriculate out of state



Traveling solo to ...

Davidson	Texas A&M
Duke	Texas State-San Marcos
Holy Cross	Univ. of Colorado
MIT	Univ. of Pennsylvania
Notre Dame	US Naval Academy
New York Univ.	UT San Antonio
Oklahoma University	University of Virginia
Princeton	Vanderbilt
St. Joseph's	Villanova

Traveling in groups to ...

UT Austin	7
Austin College	5
UT Plan II	3
Harvard	2
SMU	2
Stanford	2
Washington & Lee	2

NOTEWORTHY

■ On Friday, April 30 and Sunday, May 2, audiences at the Cistercian theater were treated to three one-act plays. Anton Ceckhov's *A Marriage Proposal* was directed by **Robert Cenzone '04** and **James Edwards '04**. *Wasps* was written and directed by **Matthew Whitenack '04**. Aaron Sorkin's *Hidden in This Picture* was directed by **Carl Weiland '04**. The surprisingly large audiences received the highly polished performances enthusiastically. The one-act plays were produced as the students' senior projects. Chris Medaille (*A Marriage Proposal* and *Hidden in This Picture*) and Jackie Greenfield (*Wasps*) acted as faculty sponsors.

■ **National Merit Finalists:** The Class of 2004 achieved a first for the school — all 17 National Semi-Finalists won recognition as Finalists. Congratulations to the boys and their proud form master, Fr. Bernard.

■ **Mathletes:** At the Mandelbrot 2003-4, Cistercian's top team in the Western Division placed third among all schools of whatever size or type. **John Davies '04** finished ahead of all but four Texas students.

STEPHANUS AWARD

Fr. Roch wins award in Hungary

For his outstanding contributions to the study of theology, Fr. Roch Kereszty received

the Stephanus Prize on May 1 from Cardinal Erdö, archbishop, primate of Hungary, and St. Stephen Society sponsor.

Previous recipients include Abbot Polycarp Zakar (Abbot of Zirc, Abbot General of the Cistercian Order Emeritus, who earned doctorates in theology, history, and canon law for

his work in church history) and Cardinal Franz König (archbishop of Vienna, Austria).

The award represents a high-level acknowledgement of Fr. Roch's work, which includes a very successful book on Christology. Now in its second edition, this book is used in several universities and schools of theology. Fr. Roch has also edited several works on the Eucharist.

In his new book, due out next year, Fr. Roch reviews the Biblical teaching on the Eucharist as well as the teachings of theologians from patristic to modern times. He also adds his own systematic theology of the Eucharist.

FORM MASTER DUTIES

Changing of the guard for the Class of '09

Fr. Julius Leloczky will hand off the duties of Form Master for the Class of '09 to Gary Nied at the end of the school year.

"I see each member of this

Form as a son of my old age," Fr. Julius wrote in a moving letter to Form III parents.

"At the same time," he suggested, "one has to take into account the cold hard facts, the unrelenting passage of time that no one has the power to stop."

Fr. Julius pointed out that he is not suffering from any ailment; he is running lower on energy.

In addition to the Class of '09, Fr. Julius has served as form master of several classes, leading to the graduation of the Classes of '86 and 2000.

"I'll continue celebrating the weekly Class Masses," he said, "and I intend to remain each boy's personal friend and mentor."

Gary Nied, who has been teaching English at Cistercian for seven years, served as assistant form master this past year.

"As a form master," Nied said, "I would like to follow in the tradition of Fr. Julius — his kind heartedness, his gentle manner, and his thoughtful leadership. I look forward to the adventure of leading these boys."

Forms I and IV beautify campus

Early Saturday morning, April 17, students, parents, and pruning instruments spilled out of cars and into the school parking lot.

Approximately 80 students (40-plus Fourth Formers and 30-plus First Formers) and 25 parents began hacking, cutting, sawing, lugging, and sweating for a more beautiful campus.

Greg Novinski '82, form master of Form IV, organized the service day as the form's confirmation community service project.

Peter Saliga, form master of Form I, thought it would be nice for his boys to participate in the project and begin a relationship with members of the Class of '08. In four years, the older boys

will be seniors and will serve as big brothers for the younger group, who will be freshmen then.

The First Formers worked for half a day; their elders worked all day.

"We cleaned up the hill below the Abbey Church, the creek area, and a few other spots," Novinski said.

"But this also was about the boys gaining a greater sense of ownership and pride in their school," he emphasized. "I also believe the parents had a chance to come to know and appreciate each other and the boys in new ways."

"I hope we've started a tradition here," Novinski said, "working together and beautifying the campus."



Photo by Jennifer McLaughlin

CARRYING THE LOAD John Armitage '08, Clay Gimenez '08, and Ian McLaughlin '08 do their part to beautify campus.

The life and times of **Rodney J. Walter**

Always ready to roll up his sleeves, Rodney Walter's 40 years of dedication, loyalty, and service have set the standard for all Cistercian teachers.

By David Stewart '74

THE RAIN HELD OFF AS FORM III STUDENTS GATHERED on an overcast April morning for the 2004 edition of the Texas History Trip. Rodney Walter stood amidst the bustling boys and lingering parents, delivering measured commands, his face taut with good-natured excitement.

A look at his watch, a check for late-arriving students, and a shake of the head confirmed that today's departure would be later than planned. Once the tardy Third Formers arrived, Mr. Walter's ruddy complexion blushed crimson; but there were no harsh words. He was already plotting to make up the time. The bus would arrive promptly at the State Capitol in Austin at lunchtime, right on schedule — just as it had 39 times before.

Parents first become aware of Mr. Walter's meticulous Texas History Trip preparations when he briefs them on the trip at the Form III parent's meeting in the spring. These sessions have achieved near legendary status.

"With a perfectly straight face," recalled Bill Dawson (father of **Will Dawson '90**, **Drew Dawson '95**, and **Jeff Dawson '97**) of his Texas History Trip primer in 1992, "Mr. Walter gave a monologue that included items our sons were *not* to bring with them on the trip. I recall the list included Vaseline, balloons, fireworks of any type, or drinks with their sack lunch for the drive to San Antonio the first day of the trip.

"Mr. Walter, you see, kept control of all drinks consumed while on the bus, not for purposes of keeping it neat and tidy, but in the interest of time. Students who were sent on the bus with a large soft drink invariably consumed it right away, making multiple rest stops necessary.

"His description of things that had been purchased on past trips, things he had had to confiscate, and other adolescent behaviors he had had to deal with, all resulted in a lengthy, no doubt well documented, list of do's and don'ts."

The trip showcases a few of Mr. Walter's signature qualities: his preparedness, his love of Texas History, and his passion for

safe transportation.

But what stands out to most faculty members is that he would take 40-plus Third Formers on such a trip at all, much less 40 times over 39 years.



The trip represents the first time most of the students have stayed in a motel room with someone other than their mom, dad, or sibling. Such opportunities inevitably invite mischief.

From running half-naked around the hotel pool to staying up late watching TV to hunting for a late-night snack, Mr. Walter has seen it all on his 40 Texas History Trips. He knows how to nip trouble in the bud and he stands ready to mete out the standard penalty for a Texas History Trip malfeasance: sweep the bus.

"I never had a teacher at any level that presented the perfect combination of absolute competence, measured discipline, tolerance, good humor and enthusiasm like Rodney Walter," remembered **Charlie Williams '70**. "I loved Texas History and the trip back in the sixties thanks to Mr. Walter."

“IT WAS HARD GETTING OUT FROM UNDERNEATH those covers,” Mr. Walter recalled of cold mornings growing up on the Walter farm near Muenster, Texas. Agnes Walter kept the Walter home neat, but conveniences in rural America during the forties era were few. A kerosene stove and a wood-burning stove provided some heat downstairs; but the children slept upstairs.

The first chore of the day was to milk the cows, which young Rodney rushed to accomplish when it was chilly outside. "Sometimes the only way to warm up was to snuggle next to the cows I was milking."

“[Mr. Walter combines] absolute competence, measured discipline, tolerance, good humor and enthusiasm.”

— Charlie Williams '70

"One for daddy," the teen said as he squeezed one of the cow's teats with his left hand. "One for grandpa," he said as he squeezed another with his right. "We were sharecroppers," Walter explained. "My dad, Oscar Walter, and our family farmed the 100 acres on halves, we shared the profits 50-50 with my grandpa, John Walter, who owned the farm. We also farmed another 110 acres on shares (a percentage basis)."

Young Rodney, his two younger brothers, and three younger sisters had plenty of chores to keep them busy.

"My time with my dad was mostly work time," he said. "We never took family vacations because cows don't take vacations. They have to be milked twice a day. We never dined out but occasionally we took picnics."

During the early summer, the two older boys would help their dad harvest grain while occasionally Agnes milked the cows herself along with all of her other duties.

The windmill out back pumped cold water into the home; water for baths and dishwashing had to be heated over the stoves. The outhouse was clearly visible from US Hwy 82, which frequently embarrassed the children.

On Saturdays, the entire family pitched in to clean the laundry. Rodney, the oldest of the six children, built the fire to heat the water for washing in a big black kettle. Saturday also was bath day.

When Oscar Walter wasn't working on the farm, he worked at a lumberyard in Muenster.

Upon graduation from Muenster Sacred Heart in the spring of 1956, Rodney found himself at the crossroads. The brand new University of Dallas had offered two scholarships to Sacred Heart graduates, but they had gone to the class valedictorian and another classmate. So, without a college education to look forward to, he began driving a combine after graduation.

"I remember thinking, 'I don't think I can do this for the rest of my life.'" He longed for an opportunity to see the world, and in July, he signed on with the Navy.

In the Navy, Rodney served as a radar technician on "picket planes" in the Pacific (see WillyVictor.com). These planes flew constantly during the height of the Cold War to provide an early-warning detection system against possible Soviet attacks.

The Navy opened Rodney's eyes to a world from which he had been sheltered in Muenster, but he did not forget the laws of the farm. While many of the young Navy men took their paychecks and went off the base to eat, Rodney saved his money and ate at the mess hall regularly.

Rodney found the job of a radar technician too specialized and too lonely. While overseas, he exchanged letters with one of his Muenster classmates who was attending the University of Dallas. Stories of student life and playing baseball on the university baseball team intrigued Walter. So, when the Navy offered him \$2,000 (which would buy a nice car in 1960) to reenlist, Walter declined and enrolled at UD.

"I paid for every penny of college myself," remembered Mr. Walter, who supplemented the money he'd made in the service with campus jobs and summer work on farmland near UD.

At UD, Rodney was drawn toward education despite a shy disposition. He became friends with Paul McArdle, another education major who also had spent the previous four years in the Navy aboard picket planes. A former president of the UD



ANOTHER TRIP
Rodney Walter
welcomes Third
Formers onto
the bus for
April's Texas
History Trip.

Photo by Jim Rasch

student body, McArdle was wrapping up his first year as a teacher at a new prep school when he dropped by Rodney's dorm room in the spring of 1964 with some news.

"The Cistercians," McArdle said, "need a history teacher for next year."

DRIVING UP TO CISTERCIAN PREP SCHOOL ON Walnut Hill Lane in 1964, one's initial impression was formed by Merici Hall. The three-story stone mansion sat on several creek-side acres, complete with a tennis court in back, and exuded a sense of establishment and orderliness. Once inside, however, that impression blurred.

Kids clad in khakis, white shirts, and black ties scattered from crowded classrooms in the oddest of locations (including the garage), bumping and pushing their way up and down the grand stair case on their way to recess, lunch, or PE. A dozen or so priests with thick Hungarian accents tried to maintain order

with the help of a small number of lay faculty members. The effort appeared hopeless at times.

Headmaster Fr. Damian Szödényi sat in a second-floor office behind a desk made of a wooden door supported by two file cabinets. Rank odors emanated from the adjacent bathroom that housed the experiments of biology teacher Fr. Melchior Chladek.

A strange promise also filled the air. Talented teachers, many with their Masters and Doctorates, instructed the boys in advanced subjects. And miles away on a hill in Irving, a new state-of-the-art facility designed by O'Neil Ford was beginning to take shape.

Rodney Walter visited with Fr. Damian and was charmed by the Hungarian's vision for the school; he also was excited that he wouldn't have to coach (a requirement for many history teachers in public schools). When Fr. Damian offered him the job a few days later, Mr. Walter readily accepted it.

In addition to history, he would have to teach Form III physical science. He also would lead a Boy Scout troop.

Fragments from forty years of Rodney Walter

It seems easy to figure out why Rodney has spanned the decades at Cistercian like he has. I think he just loves his job. Maybe he would be just as genuine and ready with a smile and a firm handshake (regardless of how long its been since he last saw you) if every day at the school was a burden. I doubt it though. To me he has always exuded a real passion for teaching and serving as a mentor inside and outside of the classroom, even on the bus. He was always, and still is, kind of ...comfortable to be around. No sarcasm. No pretense. The real deal.

— Charlie Williams '70

Quiz bowl was always impressive. Because he was so intense about it, we reciprocated likewise. "*Correct!*" he would say in a very German authoritative way, and you could tell he loved it. We were all very eager to get our geography and history down pat, because there was a genuine rush of the satisfaction from being so correct that you were 'Mr. Walter Correct.'

— Robert Northrup '00

His Indian spelling test in Texas History. To this day I can still spell "Coahuiltecan" and pronounce it correctly.

— David J. Laubach II '99

Many years ago on the drive home from school, my son (then in Form III) remarked, "Mom, if Mr. Walter doesn't know it, it didn't happen in Texas." I find that I must echo my son's words because if Mr. Walter doesn't know it, it didn't happen at Cistercian. He not only knows this school, he loves the school and cares deeply about all members of the Cistercian family.

— Chris Medaille, English department

Mr. Walter knew about every misprinted word, misplaced comma or missing period that was in the Texas History Book we used to read.

— Stuart Vetterick '92

The first day of class he introduced himself and then proceeded to write his name on the chalkboard in huge capital letters.

W-A-L-T-E-R. then he said "my name is not *Walters!*" and wrote a huge S on the board and put a big X through it, making us recite and promise to not butcher the delicacy of his name. And I know that we were not the first ones to hear that opening day talk.

— Matt Truitt '03

He is such an intrinsic part of the school that it is hard to differentiate his work from the work of the school (and vice versa). Everywhere you went, you might run into him ... Mr. Walter could surprise you anywhere: he'd be on the lower field one minute, then suddenly he's by the Science Building, then he's walking through the gym, then he's out in the parking lot ... all the while you thought he was in class. Perhaps the reason why he is so adamant about the fact that his last name is "Walter" instead of WalterS is that there really are several of him walking about the school? Hmmm....

— Jeremy Gregg '97

He has been Mr. Reliability in every aspect of the word; he is a rare man who can be trusted with everything — to keep a promise, to carry out a task, to keep a secret — everything.

— Fr. Julius

Mr. Walter referred to Steak & Ale as "Ache & Stale."

— Peter Heyne '97

Rodney was usually the first layman here in the morning and the last to leave in the evening. No matter what the day or time of year, Rodney's car could almost always be seen in the parking lot — Saturday, there it is; Sunday, there it is again; Christmas break — gosh, there's Rodney's car; summer holidays, July 2, isn't that Rodney's car?; 8:42 on a Tuesday evening, there's that little red Honda again!

— Patrick Mehen, history department

He's my hero.

— Matt Walter '86

But, Mr. Walter did have one misgiving — Fr. Damian's view of discipline.

"I want our teachers to *foster* discipline in the boys," Fr. Damian emphasized during their interview. "I do not want our teachers to *impose* discipline."

Mr. Walter's reservations over Fr. Damian's disciplinary policy would soon grow. After the move to the new Irving campus in January 1965, Cistercian's two new school busses (Fr. Damian had them painted a medium green to make them stand out) became the institution's lifeline to its predominantly Dallas-based clientele. When the first two bus drivers proved unreliable, Fr. Damian offered the jobs to Walter and McArdle for \$100 a month. The young men jumped on the assignment, but quickly found that they could do little to "foster" discipline while driving a bus. Some boys required a bit more persuasion.

"Mr. Walter used to drop me off every afternoon after school," remembered **David Hines '72**, now a doctor in Chicago. "As he drove off one day, I picked up a rock nearby and from a blind spot behind the bus, launched it high into the air.

"By the time it rattled loudly off the roof, I had crossed the street and was looking very innocent. He screeched on the brakes and from his window (I can still hear him now) yelled, 'Hines, I want a 500-word essay from you tomorrow!'

"When he drove off, I reached for another rock, but he was looking at me in the side view mirror the whole time. I often wondered how he could drive forward while checking me out in the mirror."

Walter and McArdle (who taught English) performed well as teachers and handled the crucial transportation jobs, but they (along with the other lay faculty members) were nevertheless just "employees."

The Cistercians, who had been entrusted with running the school by the founders, in effect "owned" the school. As the entrepreneurs and owners, the monks earned nothing while they paid the lay faculty members a competitive salary for their labors.

Education lay at the heart of the Cistercian Order. In Europe, Cistercian monks not only ran the show, they comprised the entire faculty, save for the PE and art instructors.

Practically speaking, however, the Cistercian monks in Texas had little actual experience running a secondary school. They were learning on the fly as they struggled to comprehend the peculiarities of American youngsters.

The learned monks occasionally disagreed amongst themselves over the policies and direction of the school, but they didn't welcome input from the lay faculty members. The ambitious Paul McArdle attempted to interject his opinions, but he eventually saw the writing on the wall. His departure in 1972 signaled his opinion of future opportunities for lay faculty at Cistercian.

“EVERYONE WAS NERVOUS FOR THEIR JOBS,” Mr. Walter recalled of the feeling among the lay faculty in the spring of 1969. Fr. Denis Farkasfalvy had been named to succeed Fr. Damian as headmaster. The days of fuzzy standards were over.

"One teacher dropped by my office and said, 'Rodney, you'd better pack your bags, I was just fired,'" Mr. Walter remembered. "I was sweating it out when I walked into my meeting with Fr. Denis in the parlor. I thought he was going to give me my walking papers."

But Fr. Denis didn't fire Mr. Walter.

"I was never so relieved in my life," Mr. Walter said. But the headmaster made new demands and set new standards for him and the entire faculty (including the monks).

While many of the lay faculty members had enjoyed a warm personal relationship with Fr. Damian, the new headmaster was less inclined to invest time in social banter. He was too busy putting the school on track.

A quick-thinking executive with vision and administrative know-how now led the school, but Fr. Denis' impatience could lead to blunt words and, subsequently, hurt feelings. Some on the faculty felt as if they were being treated like second-class citizens.

Only those who embraced Fr. Denis' mission for the school would stick around. The others quit or were fired.

As the seventies wore on, improved hiring procedures begot better teachers and teacher turnover slowed. Discipline also began to improve with strong support from the top.

"It was hard, but what Fr. Denis did was the right thing," Mr. Walter reflected. "The school and its reputation have grown, largely because Fr. Denis took charge in those years. Without Fr. Denis, I don't know where Cistercian would be today. It took that kind of person to turn things around."

When Fr. Bernard Marton became headmaster in 1981, he immediately asked Mr. Walter (who had been a classmate at UD) for assistance.

"I had full and complete trust in Rodney," said Fr. Bernard. "I gave him his first administrative job and it evolved to the point where I named him administrative assistant several years later. He became my right-hand man."

"Rodney was very adept at handling the details of the unglamorous jobs — running the plant, transportation, insurance plans, and retirement plans. He is very resourceful and loyal.

"He's about as good as a Cistercian," laughed Fr. Bernard.

Mr. Walter became the first lay faculty member to earn responsibilities above the level of department head.

By this time, Mr. Walter's three boys — **Rod Walter '83**, **Matt Walter '86**, and Bill Walter — began attending Cistercian. This was another first for a Cistercian teacher. It was hard to imagine anyone more invested in the school than Rodney Walter, or anyone who had so many diverse perspectives on the school: teacher, bus driver, administrator, and now parent. He had even served as a form master (for the Class of '75 between 1967 and 1971 and for the Class of '91 between 1983 and 1985).

"I didn't know what to call him at school," remembered Rod Walter, the first son of a teacher to face his parent in class. "I would just raise my hand. Finally, I started to call him 'Mr. Walter.'"

"For his part, he never acted like my dad at school and he never acted like my teacher at home," Rod added. "That was really important to me."

Matt Walter remembers his dad, the soccer coach, showing up to practice precisely at 5:30. "He'd pull the bus into the parking lot of the police station, coach our practice, then he'd drive us home. I really enjoyed those rides with him on the bus."

"We were very proud that he drove the bus," he recalled. "It was a big part of our lives. He'd park the bus at Mary Immaculate Church and walk home to save money for the family. He had a second car (the '56 Chevy) but hardly ever drove it."

"He's a wonderful dad," said his wife Libby Walter, whose love and support were essential in allowing her husband to give so much to Cistercian. "He would come home after an exhausting day and throw the ball with the boys no matter

how tired he was.”

“Somehow he found time and energy to coach our soccer teams, attend our baseball games, be active in our Parish, keep his three sons in line, maintain our home, and keep his ’56 Chevy running,” said Rod Walter. “Come to think of it, he is a pretty amazing hero.”

Rod and Matt were both exceptional student/athletes. Rod played goalkeeper at UD where he graduated *magna cum laude*. Matt was recruited to play quarterback at Princeton.

Bill, two years Matt’s junior, worked hard but found Cistercian’s rigorous curriculum difficult. At the end of his sophomore year, Bill departed Cistercian for R. L. Turner in Carrollton. He excelled at Turner and won admission to Texas Tech where he performed well his first semester despite fighting depression.

“He was a very good person,” Mr. Walter reflected recently, “perhaps way too sensitive to the problems that he observed.”

Home for the holidays his freshman year, Bill took his life on the Cistercian campus. His father found him on Christmas morning 1988.

Friends and schoolmates of Bill and the Walter family packed Mary Immaculate to capacity for the funeral. There was standing room only. “It’s sad that Bill’s disease prevented him from seeing how many people loved him,” said Fr. Bernard.

“COME HERE TO WORK,” emphasized Rodney Walter to his colleague and good friend, Bob Haaser. “Work is very important to him,” Haaser said. “I think he learned that on the farm where there are no specialists. At Cistercian, whether it’s working with young men in class, organizing the bus system, maintaining the facilities, or answering our questions about insurance and retirement, he’s ready to roll up his sleeves. No job is above or beneath Rodney Walter.”

“I think the man is gifted with a reservoir of patience that very few humans enjoy,” suggested **Todd Bryan ’86**. “One time I threw a bunch of chewing gum wrappers out the bus window on Stemmons Expressway on the way to Valley View. After exiting the highway, he stopped the bus and calmly asked who did it. (I decided it was better to confess).

“Speak to me before you get off,” he said. No yelling or humiliation. When I came to the front of the bus as we approached my stop, he told me that throwing the wrappers out the window reflected poorly on the school. He also pointed out that they could have distracted other drivers and caused an accident.

“It was just a very honest explanation of why what I did was not a good thing, which made me understand why I would be punished. He made me sweep out the bus the next day at lunch; again, no condemnation, no yelling, and nothing that I felt was odious. I fully understood why what he was doing was right, which also ensured I never did anything like that again. Frankly, this was education in its highest form.”

“There’s no other word for Rodney’s care and concern for the school than ministry,” said Jonathan Leach, a former Cistercian teacher and drama director. “You always knew that he really, really cared: about the boys, about his fellow teachers, and certainly about the physical bricks-and-mortar of the school.”

Through Cistercian’s toughest years – and some tough years

*“I can’t imagine
trusting
another teacher
as much as
I trust Rodney.”*

— Fr. Peter Verhalen ’73

of his own – Rodney Walter has been there for the school, its students, fellow teachers, and the monks.

In fact he has outlasted all but one monk — the indefatigable Fr. Matthew Kovacs – who was teaching at Cistercian in 1964.

“I can’t imagine trusting another teacher as much I trust Rodney,” said Fr. **Peter Verhalen ’73**. “He has always been available to pick up whatever task needed doing. Now that we are trying to

find people to take over for him, I am realizing the extent to which he just accumulated responsibilities and jobs. His jobs will be distributed among three veteran faculty and staff members – and that only covers the administrative jobs.”

It took Mr. Walter’s many years of consistent service to prove that lay faculty members could be as trustworthy and dedicated as the monks. He led the way in turning the monks’ perspective on lay faculty 180 degrees from the sixties and seventies.

“We are looking to rely on lay teachers more and more,” said Fr. Peter. “We hope to cultivate more ‘lifers’ like Rodney. And we are recognizing that responsibility is one way for us to express appreciation.”

The “Rodney factor” — the example of a wonderful life lived in service to young men at Cistercian — has encouraged other teachers to consider their positions at Cistercian as a life’s work rather than just a job. The average tenure of Cistercian faculty members has hovered around 13 years for several years.

“Perhaps the most important change over the years has been the elevation of the female faculty,” Mr. Walter said. That process began during the eighties when Fr. Bernard began naming females to head departments. Fr. Peter has kept the ball rolling.

“As Mr. Walter winds down his career,” said **Greg Novinski ’82**, “there will be a *Continuum* in his honor, perhaps a standing ovation from the students at Closing Ceremonies, perhaps cards and letters of thanksgiving and remembrance. These are all appropriate.

“However, the thing that most would honor Rodney Walter would be to take on his sense of service.”

After Bill’s sudden passing in 1988, Abbot Denis and Fr. Bernard suggested that Mr. Walter consider leaving Cistercian so that he would not be confronted constantly with the scene of the tragedy.

“But this is where my friends are,” Mr. Walter responded. “Cistercian and Mary Immaculate are too important to me. I can’t leave because I need their support.”

Only this year’s severe back pain could force Mr. Walter to start tearing himself away from the school.

“When I walk down these halls,” he said recently, reflecting on the last few weeks of his full-time employment at Cistercian, “I feel like I am part of this place. We’re one. It’s going to be difficult to walk away from this job.”

“Rodney is a man of deep, personal religious faith, a man of empathy and compassion,” said Fr. Julius Leloczky who has known him for 39 years.

“He has been a man of serenity and peace. I never saw him nervous or short-tempered,” he marveled. “I always felt that his calmness came from the deeply felt conviction that he is exactly at the place where God meant him to be.”

David Stewart can be reached in Dallas, Texas through david@stewartpublications.com

Shooting for the MOON

In Middle School, Kramer Rice's career at Cistercian appeared near an end. Now, the sky's the limit.

By Tom Pruitt

BLESSINGS ABOUND FOR THOSE OF US WHO TEACH, but the opportunity Cistercian provides for us to teach in both the Middle and Upper Schools, thereby getting to know these young men first as wide-eyed middle schoolers and later as the maturing young men of high school, is a true privilege.

I can think of no student who has been more rewarding to watch as he passed through this long process than graduating senior **Kramer Rice '04**. I can still remember encountering him for the first time in the summer school session of 1996, just before he entered Form I, his bright eyes dancing and the high pitch of his voice full of wild enthusiasm as his arms swept wide though the air in front of his face to clear away all doubt anyone around him might have about whatever exciting news he might have to tell at the moment. For his senior project, Kramer was once again back in the First Form classroom, this time on the other side of the desk, teaching religion with the same enthusiasm, and some of the same gestures, he had shown eight years earlier.

Later, during his sophomore year, when many of his classmates were having less than stellar success fighting off various kinds of boredom with school, Kramer had found various niches, with community service (at the end of his junior year he won the highest award given for community service, the James M. Collins Service Award), in the art room, with the literary-art magazine *Reflections*, and in athletics with tennis, cross-country, soccer, and track. He seemed, moreover, to have a particular passion for each of them.

"I am not the type of person who dabbles here and there. If something truly interests me, it only seems logical to pursue it to the fullest. If I don't, I feel I'm doing myself a great injustice." Roberto

THE TEACHER Kramer Rice '04 after teaching a Form I religion class as part of his senior project.

Munguia, chair of the Fine Arts Department, concurs with Kramer's self-assessment. "Kramer's always ready to assist with any project that needs finishing, but even more significantly, he's always been the one to push beyond himself toward true discovery in his artwork, especially in his painting." While it seems clear that a deep thirst for knowledge drives his passion, he also finds a way to balance his activities. He just doesn't like the connotation of the word balance. "I would never say I have to 'balance' all my hobbies and activities because the word implies strain or complication. I don't 'balance' them; I simply take them one at a time, and enjoying them each to the fullest is what keeps me in balance."

Chris Medaille, a member of the English Department, recalls an experience many of us have had. "I crossed paths with Kramer several times one afternoon recently. First I saw him as I was leaving First Form math and he was just going in to teach First Form religion as part of his senior project. Later I saw him again as he stopped by to discuss literary-art magazine business with Mrs. Greenfield. After school he rushed in to rehearse for Cart Weiland's one-act play (after a double practice of tennis and track, that is). Each encounter reminded me once again of his enthusiasm, courtesy, and dedication."

Many of us can remember, almost in disbelief now, that this same young man struggled in Middle School to keep up with the ever-increasing difficulties of Latin and Algebra and science. There was even a sense, stated reluctantly in one faculty meeting, that Kramer might flourish more readily in a less rigorous environment. Three years later, to prove us all wrong, he was declared a National Merit Commended student and has been on the honor roll throughout high school. It was a miraculous turnaround in which we all rejoiced.

"In Middle School I didn't even know what a National Merit scholar

Continued on page 20



Photo by Jim Reisch

A view of success, reunions, and lunch from West Texas

By Smokey Briggs '84

For the record, going to work every day with a lunch in a brown paper bag that I did not pack myself is an indication of success.

I WRITE 52 COLUMNS A YEAR. Well, I used to. Since August I write a few more than that since I am now the lead (read almost only) columnist at two newspapers, one I publish and the other I publish and own along with a bank that seriously needs to rethink the hiring criteria of its loan officers.

As often as possible I make sure that my pithy prose can be utilized at both shops but it does not always work out that way so I'm averaging 60 or so columns a year.

In between columns, fate will toss a few commissioners' court meetings my way, the odd wreck, an editorial or two, a few obituaries, and the always interesting weather story.

In short, I spend more than a few hours a day pecking at a keyboard.

So, when Dr. Pruitt and **David Stewart '74** approached me via email about writing a piece for *The Continuum*, it did not really frighten me.

It should have.

I should have read the suggested topics carefully. I did not.

I did what many of us do on a regular basis – I let my eyes read the words while my brain worked on something more pressing such as whether She-who-must-be-obeyed had included cookies in my lunch.

SWMBO, for the record, is a term of endearment for my lovely wife, Laura.

And yes, often she packs my lunch.

And, for the record, going to work every day with a lunch in a brown paper bag that I did not pack myself is an indication of success.

Real men have priorities. Lunch ranks high on the list. If anything I am a real man.

If my brain had been paying attention as my eyes rolled across the email I would have cringed.

More than likely I would have stabbed the delete key and moved on to better things, like lunch.

The topics?

Subject 1: Life as a West Texas newspaperman and how this fulfills you.

(This will serve as the first in an occasional series devoted to the various ways in which Cistercian alumni define success in their lives.)

Subject 2: The prospect of coming to your 20th

high school reunion. What are your thoughts about seeing the old school and your old buddies?

Define success? Thoughts on a reunion? Gee Dr. Pruitt, could you come up with two more completely open-ended topics that lead directly into maudlin swamps infested by trite expressions of human emotion and the occasional apology for living a rather humble existence?

I did not think so.

What do you say?

When you start defining success, there are two paths. One leads to boasting. The other to apology.

Reunion thoughts?

Here is a little exercise. Start writing about how you feel on any subject.

Now stop. Real men do not write about their feelings. It is just wrong.

So, in the past few days I have slaughtered innumerable electronic trees attempting to pen something that would fill the desired hole in *The Continuum*, be ready by deadline and hopefully not be a total waste of ink.

It took some time. After a few disastrous patrols during which I spilled much ink in enemy territory, I realized that both of Dr. Tom's possible subjects share a theme.

(I suspect that Dr. Pruitt, Father Peter, and maybe even Ms. Rando would be impressed by my ability to pull this connection out of thin air. It was an ability I lacked 20 years previous as all three pointed out on multiple English papers).

That it took me several days of thought to make the connection, I chalk up to my rather complex cerebral processes. (SWMBO chalked it up to something less flattering.) If there had been a few cookies in my lunch that fateful day I am sure I would have made the connection sooner.

The common theme is success.

The topic behind door number one is all about success.

Behind door number two is the reunion. You cannot say reunion without thinking about success.

It is human nature. Humans define themselves by comparison.

The day you graduate high school the playing field of life is as level as it will ever get. On a day

late in May in 1984 Father Bernard's form stood on a little stage and faced their friends and families as graduates of Cistercian Prep School.

At that moment we were equals.

Yeah, many of us possessed more talent than the others in this or that subject. Most possessed more talent than me in all subjects but lunch.

Nevertheless, on that day, we were equals. We were graduates. We had survived. We were equally successful by the particular measure that is education.

At that moment, what mattered more than who our parents were, or how much money we had or did not have, or how pretty our girl friend was (or in my case if we had one), or what car we drove, was what we had accomplished.

That day we were successful.

I have not seen many of those comrades in twenty years.

I cannot believe that two decades have passed. But it has.

We are now the old guys who occasionally would drop by the school to visit with their former teachers when we were students. Guys who were so impossibly old that they graduated back in the early seventies. Guys old enough to have been classmates of Fr. Peter.

At least *we* will never be *that* old.

But we are working on it.

We have lost 20 years, or gained 20 years worth of experience. Either way, we can no longer be as equal as we were in 1984.

It would be inhuman if we did not compare notes – this degree from that college, this car, this house in this neighborhood, this job... the list is endless.

I do not think that it is a sign of selfish materialism that the first notes of comparison are material.

Material things are obvious and easily gauged.

In the past 20 years I have been lucky enough to count myself successful a number of times.

Life has been neither kind nor cruel. It has simply been life.

As life happened, I had the opportunity to define success on a regular basis. Sanity has required a constant tweaking of my definition.

We do it every day. Usually it is an unconscious process.

Some days life forces us to take a hard look at our definition since by the existing definition we are abject failures.

It means a lot when you think about it.

How we define success goes to the core of our being. It is how we define ourselves, our worth, our value.

I imagine that most of the Class of '84 has tried out most possible definitions of success in the approximately 7,300 days since graduation.

I have.

I have defined it as accomplishment. I have



DADDY'S HOME
Smokey Briggs
with his girls and
his Toyota pickup

defined it as a new Toyota pickup. I have defined it as making the rent. I have defined it as 13 years of marriage without being shot. I have defined it as putting out 255 editions of a daily newspaper each year and occasionally covering an issue in a way that really informed our readers of something that mattered.

Today I defined it as a beautiful West Texas morning spent at the range sighting in a pair of good rifles with my brother, combined with venison meatloaf and SWMBO's homemade coconut crème pie at suppertime.

It does not take too many days like that to convince a man that he is truly successful.

Daily I define success as driving up to the farm gate at the front of our property to be greeted by two absolutely beautiful girls ages 3 and 6 both of whom are jumping up and down and screaming, "Daddy's home, Daddy's home."

Now cowboy, that is success, I do not care who you are.

Of the 7,000 or so definitions I have tried out in the past 20 years, two screaming little girls who are glad to see me is my favorite.

For them I make a difference. It really matters if I come home.

For a word that nearly defies definition, this is the definition I have come to appreciate most – whether I made a difference, albeit a very small one, in some other person's life.

I told you this swamp was infested with trite emotion.

Oh well, truth is sometimes trite.

This is what I hope to hear and see and feel when I get to see the guys who soldiered through Cistercian with me.

I hope I get the impression that they have lived 20 years in a way that made a difference to the people around them and that they have found a definition of success that allows them to appreciate such an accomplishment.

I hope, that by that measure, we are equals as we were 20 years ago.

And, I hope lunch is good.

Smokey Briggs can be reached in Monahans, Texas through smokey@pecos.net.

*I hope
I get the
impression
that [my
classmates]
have lived
20 years in
a way that
made a
difference to
the people
around
them.*

Why have so many departed from our midst recently?

If you followed the life of our Cistercian Family over the past seven years, you may have wondered at the unusually high number of deaths. In 1998 Brian Price, a new student in Form V who immediately earned the friendship of his class, died unexpectedly from a congenital heart defect. Within the next couple of years five Cistercian Fathers passed away, some of them after a long struggle with excruciating illness. In the fall of 2000 our beloved Coach Tom Hillary left us. During the last school year the mother of **Sam Bowler '06** died. Then in the summer of 2003 there followed a month-long vigil at the bedside of **Seth Henderson '03** ending in a Requiem Mass for him. We had not quite recovered when we were asked to celebrate a memorial mass for Chris Bock, a long-time English teacher at CPS and the founder of our award-winning *Reflections*. Then came the news of the sudden death of Dr. **Eddie Haller '91**, and just two months ago the mother of **Eric Ojeda '05** was taken away from us, an absolutely unexpected and heart-wrenching departure. I cannot even begin to mention the grandparents of Cistercian students and the parents of alumni.

Of course, not every alumnus, not every student, parent, and faculty member suffered through all these losses to the same extent, yet their cumulative effect has been felt in some way by the whole Cistercian Family. We cannot blame God for what has happened, nor can we find out why God allowed this or that person to die. Each death has a significance and lessons of its own, lessons that those close to the deceased might discover over a period of time; but even the closest relatives and friends will not fully understand until the threads of our confusingly intertwined lives will be finally untangled and reveal their secrets in God's eternity. In this column we can only aim at finding a partial meaning, a flicker of light to help us.

Human beings are eager to forget that our life withers away almost as fast as the flower of the field. So, when someone departs from this world, we shudder at our own approaching end. Confrontation with the death of our loved ones is a confrontation with our own inevitable demise. The effect can be most sobering. We might realize that every moment of our continued existence depends upon the whims of forces, entirely independent from us and entirely indifferent to our feelings: microbes, speeding cars, cold-blooded murderers and the like. On the other hand, our faith tells us that God uses this complex web of chance happenings to carry out his sovereign plan of mercy and justice. We die when He judges that we have received enough chances and graces to be ready for eternal life (or eternal death) and when we are no longer needed to help or test others. By "testing others," I mean that our sinful acts test the goodness of those around us. Our sins constitute a challenge

for others to grow in virtue but also a temptation to fall into similar sins.

Blessed are those who learn from these lessons and accept the awareness of being a creature in unceasing, total dependence on God. The teenagers who acquire this sense of reality will grow up much faster than the average and will face life with a serenity that cannot easily be shaken. Brian Price's sudden death first created a stupor in the classroom, the numbed silence of a mortuary. In the long run, a sense of deep solidarity emerged, his classmates began to support and care for each other and they still do so even now, three years after graduation from Cistercian. We could observe a similar process in Seth Henderson's class. A bunch of carefree, mischievous kids before (at least many of them impressed me so), they turned into a community of tenderly loving friends who came to watch at Seth's bedside for a month and prayed and cried when he finally passed into God's eternity. Seth has sealed their belonging to each other, to the School, and hopefully, to God.

If the person who dies was close to God, his departure takes place only on the level of our sense perception. On a deeper level all who have passed over into communion with God are much more intensely present to those whom they have loved. But they are present to us only in Christ. As Fr. Peter put it in his homily about Seth Henderson: "from now on you can find Seth only in Jesus Christ. and if you want to find him, remain close to Christ."

What a blessing it is to have in heaven a family member or true friend who was close to us on earth and now sees God face to face. This person serves as a living bridge for us. Because of this person, heaven becomes a familiar place, a place that is no longer foreign and unknown. The burning intensity of God's holiness is not so frightening now since we trust that we will find our mother, our brother, our friend in the glow of that holiness.

In addition to the ancient and contemporary Cistercian saints, official and unofficial, heaven is being enriched every year with more and more members of the Cistercian Family in Texas. We are linked together and pulled upwards by this invisible company.

However, this awareness of eternity should not make us indifferent to life on earth. On the contrary, since we know that every earthly action of ours builds up our eternal personality and our eternal relationships, every earthly moment, even the frustratingly petty and routine actions and sufferings, receive a lasting value that no earthly power can take away from us.

— Fr. Roch Kereszty

Fr. Roch can be reached at the school through Fr-Roch@cistercian.org

Doris Lopez Ojeda

On March 29, Doris Ojeda, mother of **Eric Ojeda '05**, passed away suddenly. Mrs. Ojeda was a devoted mother

who supported her children in all their activities. A former model, she also actively served in the businesses of her family (Lopez Electric) and that of her husband (Ojeda's Restaurants). She leaves behind Eric, his sister Nina, and husband Raymon.



Underclassmen shine on the track for Cistercian

With just one senior running for the track team this year, the Hawks faced an uphill battle all year long.

But, Coach Steve McCarthy said the 2004 Hawk track team battled all year and found success in the First Baptist Meet, where Cistercian finished second

out of a field of 23 teams.

At SPC, the results were not spectacular but some individual performances stand out.

Trey Mohr '05 won All-SPC honors when he cleared 13' in the pole vault. He finished second on misses.

Sam Bowler '06 finished fourth at SPC in the 400 meter with a time of 51.8. Bowler earned the Hawks' Newcomer of the Year award in track this year.

"I haven't seen such a deep conference in some time," McCarthy said. "Times that would have placed third in last year's races, didn't even qualify this year."

Gabby Ferenczi '06 placed fifth in the 110 hurdles and **Colin Leatherbury '05** finished eighth.

David Haley '06 placed seventh in the long jump with a personal best of 20'2" and also finished seventh in the triple jump.

Austin Nevitt '04, the team's MVP, earned seventh place in the high jump.

The Hawk relay team suffered from lack of experience and a lack of seniors but still managed respectable showings: eighth in the 4 x 800, seventh in the 4 x 400, and seventh in the 4 x 100.

"We're young," McCarthy said. "We are mostly sophomores and juniors."

"But with such interest in track, 55 boys came out for track, we're only going to get better."



Photo by Vincent Zimmern '06

HURDLING HAWKS John Paul Heyne '06 (left) and Colin Leatherbury '05 (right) battle each other in the 110 hurdles at the Cistercian Relays in April.

Vets Bailey and Heard lead Hawks on the diamond

Hawk baseballers, led by **Stephen Bailey '04** and **Zach Heard '05**, were tied with St. Mark's going in to the seventh inning of their round two game during the SPC Division I tournament.

Heard, the Hawks' number one pitcher, had held the Lions to only three runs and Cistercian trailed 3-2. In the previous meeting between the two teams, Heard had struck out 13.

With just two players on the team with varsity experience (Bailey and Heard), this was quite an accomplishment for the young Hawks.

But in the seventh, the wheels came off and the Lions scored four runs to punctuate a 7-2 win. The Lions would go on to sweep their remaining opponents and win the SPC Division I crown.

Heard had nothing to hang his head about. In his two games against St. Mark's, the Cistercian ace gave up just three earned runs.

The Hawks went on to beat Greenhill in the next game of the tournament 9-6, avenging a defeat to the Hornets earlier in the season.

"But at that point," said Coach Mark Gray, "we ran out of pitchers."

Stephen Bailey, short stop and pitcher, Heard, and **Jordan Campbell '04** provided much of the team's offense. Bailey led the team, hitting .351 with 14 runs batted in. In addition, he stole 21 bases.

Heard hit .306 with 12 RBIs and Campbell hit .304.

While the veterans were key, several youngsters stepped in and performed well, especially on defense. **Evan Blakely '07** started at second base and played some short stop while **Patrick Flanagan '07** started at catcher for all but two games.

"Not only did they play well on defense," Gray added, "they did better at the plate than I thought they would. I'm looking forward to having them around for the next three years."

Other bright spots included **Connor Arras '04** who made plays from center field position and **Matthew Lawson '04** who led the team in doubles with eight.

All in all, Coach Gray was happy with the team's 10-15 record.

"To win 10 games against the kind of competition we played, was pretty good," he said.



Photo by Vincent Zimmern '06

EASY OUT Hawk short stop Stephen Bailey '04 makes the throw for a put-out.

CISTERCIAN CALENDAR

June

- 4-6** Reunions Weekend
with Hawks' Hoops,
Mass, and alumni brunch

August

- 12** Black & White
scrimmage
- 24** Opening Ceremonies
- 25** Classes begin

September

- 6** Labor Day holiday

October

- 8** Homecoming

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Shooting for the moon

Continued from page 11

was, let alone the PSAT. Middle School was difficult for me, but I never questioned if Cistercian was the place for me; others may have but I did not. I always felt at home at CPS, and loved the atmosphere, students, and teachers." Kramer had something to prove—that he belonged at the school he loved. "So I simply worked a little harder. A lot is to be said for hard work."

The hard work was not just limited to the classroom. In Middle School Kramer was not particularly athletic. Though proficient in tennis, he didn't really excel at other sports. In high school he waited until sophomore year to go out for cross country and discovered he liked to run. He went out for soccer in the winter and track in the spring and discovered he had speed. In the recent annual Athletic Banquet, his dedication bore fruit. Kramer, along with only eight other seniors, won the Hawk Award, given to those seniors who letter in three or more sports. Kramer was one of only three seniors who actually lettered in four sports, and in both cross country and tennis he was named captain. "By his senior year," Athletic Director Dan Lee remarked, "Kramer had become like a player-coach on his teams, helping the coach organize and strategize for upcoming meets or matches. We'll miss his leadership next year."

But for one activity Kramer reserved a special passion. *Reflections*, the school literary-art magazine, has been for many years now an award-winning magazine, a fact which each year's staff takes great pride in and works very hard to continue. Running the magazine is a tough and often contentious job as the staff deliberates to pick the pieces, design the cover, and work out the general appearance according to carefully selected specs. Picking the proper leadership is obviously crucial to its success. "In previous years," Jackie Greenfield, chair of the English Department and the magazine sponsor, commented, "I have almost always appointed co-editors-in-chief. Last summer I made the decision to diverge from that practice. I named Kramer. I wanted someone in the position who wouldn't just produce a magazine. I wanted someone who wouldn't wilt among a divid-

ed camp, and who would have the personality conducive to mediating and drawing all to a compromise. Kramer has done an even better job than I imagined him being able to do."

Besides showing firm leadership in listening to all points of view while moving the group forward toward all deadlines, and in holding the line during meetings in which fellow staffers hotly disagreed about this year's pieces and specs, he has also won another unprecedented victory, convincing both Greenfield and Headmaster **Fr. Peter Verhalen '73** to allow him to raise the extra money to have color in the contents of the magazine. "We do not expect our poets," Kramer pointed out, "to give up rhythm or images; why is it that we ask our artists to give up color?"

Fr. Peter was quite impressed. "Kramer put together a wonderful, concrete, convincing proposal to introduce color into *Reflections*, a request that had been made before, unsuccessfully, but Kramer laid out very clearly exactly how much money was needed, why it was needed, and how he would raise it. With this demonstration of his people skills, his organizational skills, his presentation skills, he put himself in a very elite group of only a handful of other Cistercian alumni who have, in my memory, possessed such consummate ability at such a young age."

Yet, all of us observing him rarely saw all that hard work in his face. His enthusiasm manifested itself in his infectious smile, his unfailing courtesy, his general graciousness, and he is a young man who seems at peace with himself and in love with the world. Saranne Gans, our librarian, speaks for many of us. "I have always noticed Kramer, ever since he entered the school in First Form. His kindness, the light of love that radiates from his eyes, and his patient, gentlemanly ways are so striking, and seem to be even more so now that he is about to graduate."

I end with a quote, one which Kramer selected for his senior page in the yearbook and which he calls his "absolute favorite," perhaps because it captures an essential constant in his personality so well: "Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

Dr. Tom Pruitt has taught English at Cistercian for 26 years. He