

The

For family, friends, and alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CNTINUIUM

June 2006

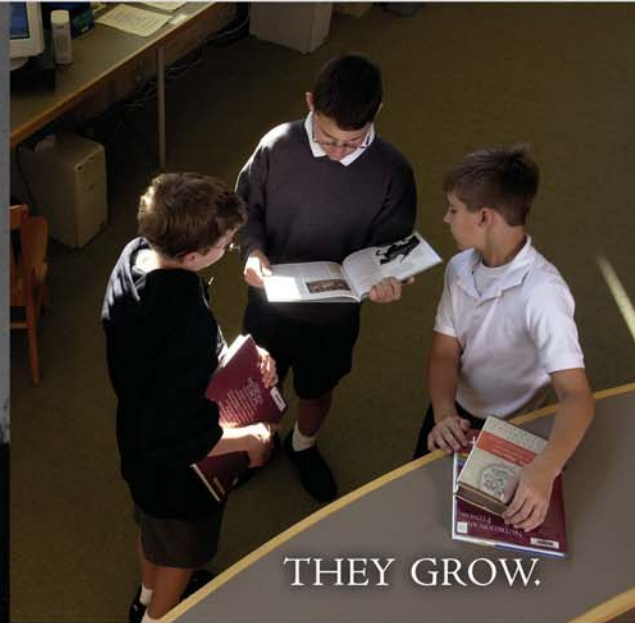


Betty Sitton uses an interactive Web site to complement her Chemistry II lecture on electrolysis.

Cistercian *and* technology

Reviewing the options for helping students learn more effectively

THE GREATEST LEGACIES DO MORE THAN LAST.



THEY GROW.

The Memorare Society was established for members of our community who wish to include Cistercian in their financial plans through bequests, trusts, wills, or other means. It's a wonderful way for people to include the school as part of their long-term financial planning.

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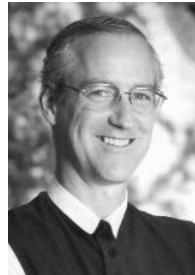
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www.cistercian.org

A great year? Let's count the smiles

The personal growth of students and teachers matters most

It's been a great year. But what does that mean? We mean that the year has gone well, that we have accomplished many of our goals. Students have learned the material teachers presented, perhaps even distinguishing themselves either within our community or in inter-scholastic competitions.



Letter from the Headmaster

Fr. Peter Verhalen '73

We have each had our challenges and faced temptations to give up, to slack off, or to resent the call to grow in respect and love for one another and for God, even in the midst of difficulties.

But the smile on the face of a student or teacher tells me that, for the most part, we have

resisted those temptations.

"Jack Bobzien '11," Mr. Saliga wrote of this year's Form III St. Bernard Award winner, has a "constant, quiet, knowing smile in and out of the classroom [that] reminds each of us of the joy life at Cistercian ought to be — even in third form."

When that same statement can be made about a significant number of students and faculty, then the year truly has been "great."

In this issue of *The Continuum*, the first feature tackles the complex issues involved in applying technology in education. Recent alumni weigh in with their views from college. While preparing Cistercian's next steps, we will always protect the school's hallmark — its focus on teachers personally leading students to the joy and excitement and power derived from a personal insight into something that is true or beautiful or good. In his article on the Senior One-Acts, Dr. Tom Pruitt points out such instances of valuable, personal growth occurring in these, the most collaborative of the senior projects.

I hope your year at Cistercian has been good, that you have grown in knowledge and gratitude. May your summer bring you rest and joy.

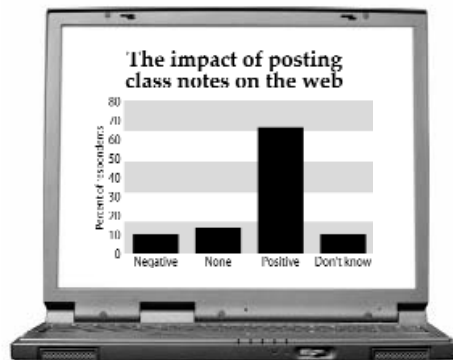
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Director's cut

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In the "Senior One-Acts," student directors coddle, scold, and plead with their actors to produce an entertaining theater experience.



Cistercian and technology 8

Armed with the opinions of college-aged alumni and personal observations from area schools, Fr. Peter is preparing to take additional steps to capitalize on technology at Cistercian.

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.

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College counseling

Bucher-Long joins Cistercian after 27 years at Hockaday

This fall, Janet Bucher-Long will become only the third college counselor in the school's history.

She succeeds Fr. Bernard Marton, who guided Cistercian students to the country's finest colleges for 25 years (15 which were during his tenure as Cistercian's headmaster).

It will be the first time in school history that Cistercian will devote a full-time employee to the important task of college counseling.

Bucher-Long has served as a college counselor at The Hockaday School for 20 years, including the last few as associate director. She is the mother of **Russell Bucher '99**.

"I felt that after 27 years at Hockaday, I was professionally a little bit restless," she said.

"This year's senior class at Hockaday inspired me," she said. "I watched them make a difference with their work in community service, like bringing Amnesty International back onto campus.

"They asked me, 'What are you going to do?'"

"I decided that I have a lot to give and I wanted to use what I learned to make a difference. I wanted to give something back and Cistercian was the perfect place because the centerpiece of the Cistercian mission has always been character."

Bucher-Long began her career at Hockaday 27 years ago as a French teacher and director of English as a second language.

Handling 40-plus students will not be a strain on Bucher-Long, who has consistently



Photo by Jim Reisch

GOING LONG Janet Bucher-Long (mother of Russell Bucher '99) comes to Cistercian with 20 years of college counseling experience at Hockaday.

counseled the lion's share of seniors at Hockaday (this year 46 students).

"Every time you meet with her, she makes you feel like you

are her only advisee," said Libby Longino, president of this year's Senior Class.

"She is totally focused on you," she added. "It was a such a relief to have such a strong advocate who cares for us and wasn't concerned about the name or caliber of the college, only whether it was the best fit for each particular student.

"She becomes more than a college counselor," Longino said, "she becomes a mentor and a friend, someone you can talk to when you're stressed.

"Tell the boys at Cistercian that they shouldn't be afraid to trust her. She would never violate that trust. And the more open you are with her, the better she can do her job."

Bucher-Long was voted one of Hockaday's "People of the Year" by the staff of the *Fourcast*, the school newspaper.

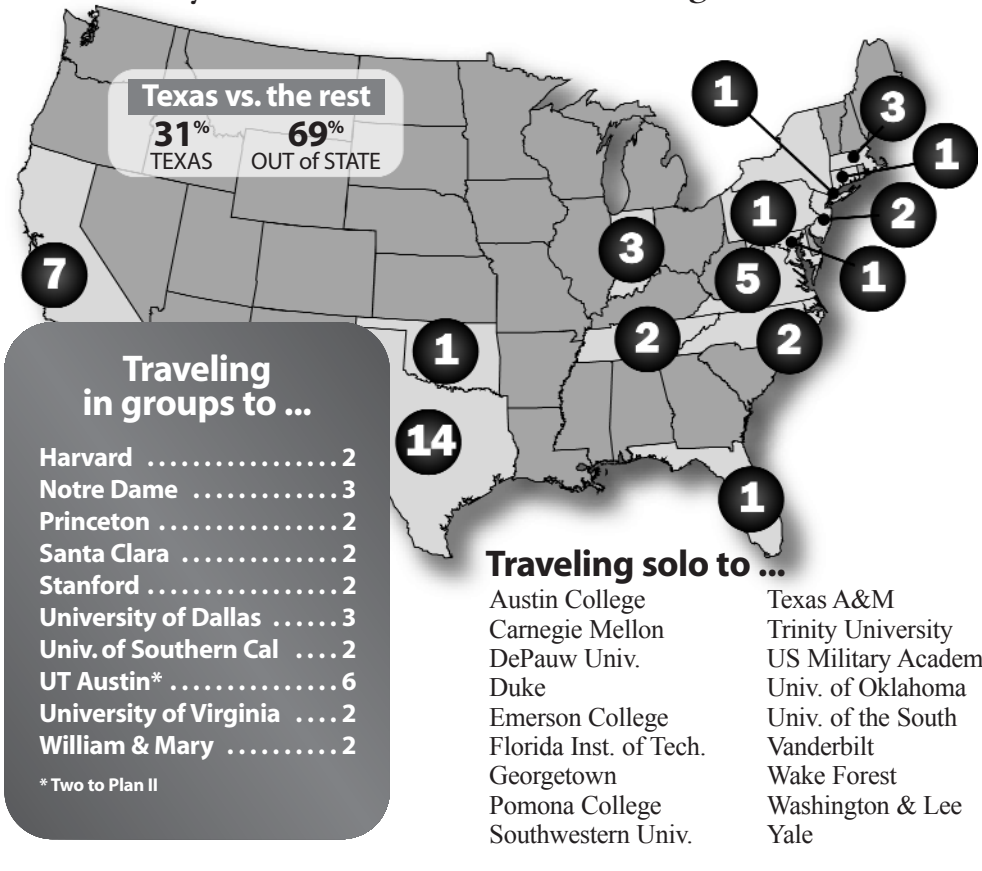
"We can think of no one," the newspaper wrote of Bucher-Long, "who deserves this recognition more, not just for this year, but for a Hockaday lifetime of friendship, guidance, support, and love."

"Janet's entire focus as a counselor is to empower the students to make the best college decision," said Sara Lennon, Hockaday's director of college counseling.

"It is a huge loss for Hockaday," Lennon added, "but a great opportunity for Janet. I know how she feels about Cistercian." Hockaday is conducting a national search to replace Bucher-Long.

Class of 2006 leans heavily on out-of-state schools

Only 14 of 45 decide to attend college in Texas



Literary magazine Reflections '05 honored as tops in the nation

In just its second year since adding color, *Reflections* has walked away with the highest honor awarded by the Columbia Scholastic Press Association (CSPA).

Last year, *Reflections 2004* was one of 22 literary magazines recognized with a Silver Medal (nine received Gold Medals).

Reflections 2005 was one of 16 literary magazines in the country to win a Gold Medal this year.

(Dallas-area schools claimed five of the 16 High School Gold Crowns for literary magazines: Cistercian, Ursuline, ESD, St. Mark's, and Hockaday. Silver Crowns went to Arlington HS and Greenhill.)

Crown Awards are the highest recognition given by the CSPA to a student print or online medium for overall excellence.

The judges consider all aspects of value to the reader or viewer: content, design or presentation, coverage, photography as well as writing and editing.

The editorial staff of *Reflections 2005* included editor **Martin Bourqui '05**, plus **Sam Bowler '06**, **Rob Madole '06**, and **Nick Krug '06**.

Giving community Parent, alumni support reach all-time highs

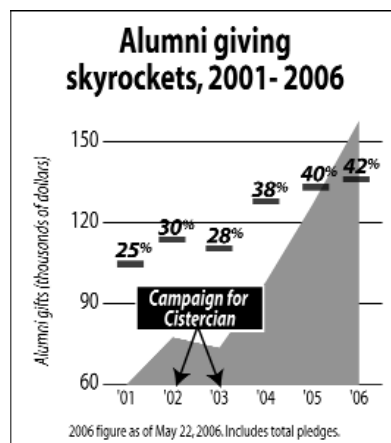
The generosity of the Cistercian community continues to grow.

Parent participation for Sustentation reached an all-time high of 96 percent, with four of eight classes reaching 100 percent participation (Forms I, II, IV, and VI). The total funds raised by Sustentation, \$486,056 in gifts and pledges to date, is also a record.

Alumni giving through the annual Phonathon has jumped

to \$159,206 as of May 22, 2006. Forty-two percent of alumni contributed. Alumni giving has grown by nearly \$100,000 from the \$60,000 per year collected in 2001.

continued on page 6



“Dead Souls” kills audiences (wink, wink, nudge, nudge)

This year's Upper School drama, *Dead Souls*, suited the cast's talented actors as well as its talented director.

“You don't think of Russian novels as being funny,” said Director David Novinski '90. “But Gogol's novel, which was itself inspired by Dante's *Inferno*, inspired a wide range of 20th-century artists, from Flannery O'Connor to the Monty Python players.”

“The boys really enjoyed its combination of humor and satire,” he said. “It's critical, but with a wink and a nudge.”

Novinski took a number of liberties with the script, adding the narrator's part – a key aspect of the novel – back in for its “soaring, lyrical passages.” The narrator was wonderfully portrayed by a suave, wry **Basil Koutsogeorgas '08**.

The story captures the travels of a former government worker named Chichikov as he attempts to persuade an array of unforgettable landowners to “sell him” their deceased peasants. (Chichikov has learned that he can borrow money by using a stable of peasants, even dead ones, as collateral.)

“Will [Arbery '07] was brilliant as Chichikov,” Novinski said, “because he had to play a character who is in all respects, medium. It is challenging to bring a character to life who is written as medium. He is not someone you would suspect of plotting such a scheme.”

“He also must act the straight man for all of the crazy characters he meets,” Novinski added.

Crazy indeed. Like the gov-

ernor, played by **Paul DiFiore '09** with his hilariously high-pitched voice and strange accent.

Or Sorbakevich, the manic-depressive landowner of bear-sized proportions, played by **Court Hoang '06**. Or the pecuniary, hunch-backed landowner played by 6'8" **James Hinckley '07**. Or the schizophrenic Korobochka, played by **Molly Miller** (a freshman at The Highlands), who is a sweet old lady one moment and a hard-boiled businessperson the next.

But for pure outrageousness, no one could match the inebriated antics of the back-slapping, two-timing Nozdryov, played perfectly by **Sam Bowler '06**. His presence and energy as Nozdryov stole the show.

In the end, Chichikov's scheme is discovered and he flees, though his escape is delayed by the funeral procession for the governor. Chichikov's cynicism for the dead governor and the distracted mourners reminds the audience that the main character is not so likeable after all. And he may be no better than the constantly drunk, habitually deceitful Nozdryov.

Unphased by his failure, Chichikov rides off in his carriage to another town, certain to find more unsuspecting prey for his fraudulent scheme.

QUIRKY CHARACTERS

The production of *Dead Souls* was brimming with wonderful character portrayals, like the performance of **Paul DiFiore '09** (left) as the governor and **Will Arbery '07** in the lead role as Chichikov.



Photo by Jim Reich

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"I can't say enough about our Form Captains and our Class Agents, as well as all those Cistercian families and alumni who participated so generously again this year," said Jennifer Rotter, development director.

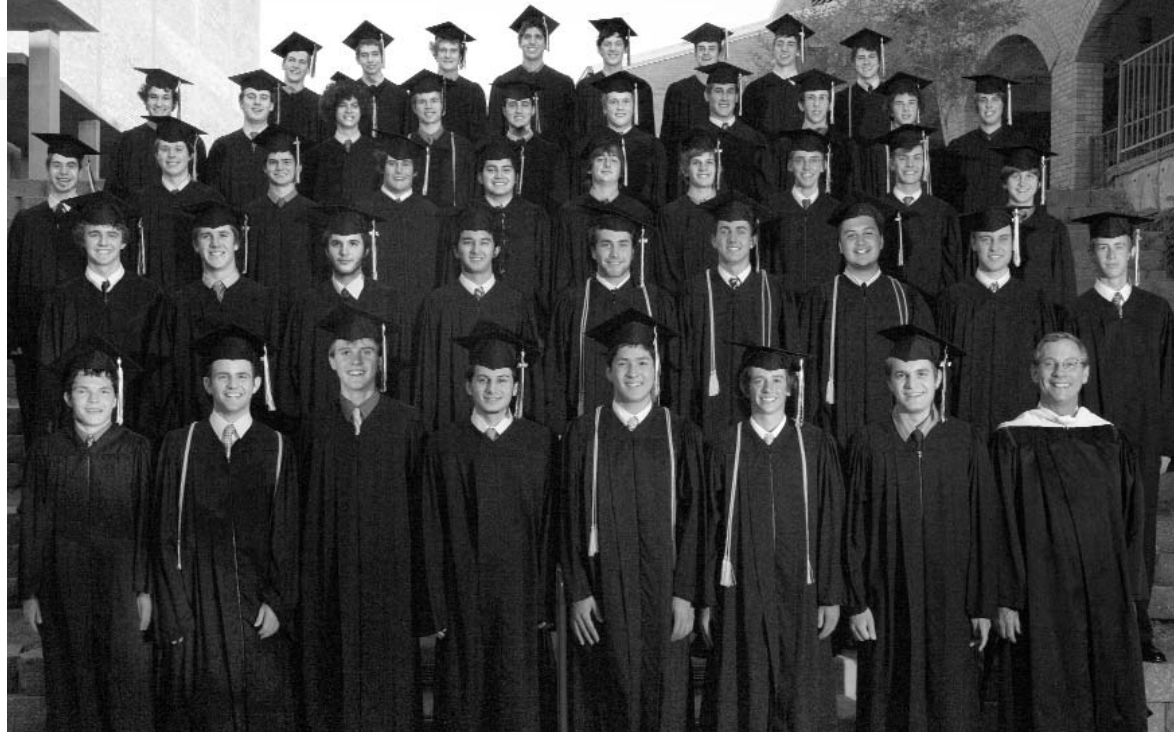
"I am once again swept away by the enthusiastic support from so many members of the community."

Class of 2006

Cooperative class accomplished in a variety of fields

Cooperative, hard-working, indomitable, talented. All describe the Class of 2006.

The class's average SAT score set a school record at 1435 (715 verbal and 720 math). Seventy-seven percent were recognized by the



National Merit Society, including 12 finalists.

The 44 members of the class took 152 Advanced Placement tests through their junior year. Of these, 97 percent were scored a 3 or above.

Artistic talents abound in the class. Eleven exhibited artwork in various shows and two exhibited in four major shows, one being the TVAA Nationals.

Seven were recognized as

CLIMACTIC DAY Members of the Class of 2006 pose at their Commencement Ceremony.

outstanding writers, including Rob Madole '06 who took part in the National Council of English essay contest and became one of very few Cistercian students ever to win the prestigious NCTE Excellence in Writing Award.

In the Department of Education's extremely competitive Presidential Scholars Program, James Hansell '06 and Patrick Romeo '06 were selected as semifinalists. Hansell advanced to finalist status.

The class excelled in athletics, especially football, basketball, track, and tennis. Eight expect to pursue athletics in college: Chris McGowan '06 will play football at Carnegie Mellon and George Morgan '06 at Washington and Lee; J.C. Buswold '06 will play basketball at Trinity and Sam Theis '06 at Austin College; Sam Bowler '06 will run track at Duke, David Pruitt '06 at Southwestern, and Grant Van Kirk '06 at William and Mary; and Will Beuttenmuller '06 will play tennis at Princeton.

In all, 28 out of the 45 members of the Class of 2006 were offered scholarships totaling \$946,442. Of those, 21 accepted scholarships worth \$290,009.

Fr. Gregory's trip to Milledgeville

Flannery O'Connor character comes to life

The American writer Flannery O'Connor and I hit it off immediately. Her grotesque, twisted anti-heroes and anti-heroines would ignite in me waves of laughter and an occasional grimace.

I read about psychopathic killers who talked incessantly about Jesus; one-legged Ph.D.'s in philosophy whose 'souls' ended up being prosthetic devices; and, one-armed comen who knew all about a time when "monks slept in their coffins!"

Having been invited to deliver a scholarly paper at the "Flannery O'Connor and Georgia Writers" symposium in Milledgeville, Georgia - her longtime home - I fancied which of her storied characters I might meet on my journey there.

The conference itself was a grand affair. The university campus was bursting with wisteria, azaleas, and dogwood of every color. My own paper on Baptismal Theology in O'Connor's story "The River" was well received.

"Well, Reverend, have you seen her corpse!" asked an unidentified and utterly forgettable old man at the end of the conference. "She's waiting for you four blocks thataway!"

Saint Flannery's large, well-marked tombstone was relatively easy to find; having died at the age of 39 in 1964, she's one of the cemetery's younger residents.

As I stood at her large, well-marked tombstone, I felt an odd darkness come over me. When I opened my eyes, the gnomic troll of a man who'd prompted me to walk here was standing there, staring into my face.

"Well, aren't you going to kiss her?" I stepped back, a bit startled.

"All you literary people are the same - too much drama, too much emotion, too much yack-yack. It's only a matter of time before you fall down on your knees and kiss the grave like she's a saint, or something - so go ahead."

He laughed and walked off.

I stood there for many, many minutes. Thinking about what she had taught me and how much pleasure I'd gotten from her works, I just didn't know what else to do. What was left for me in the lengthening shadows of the Milledgeville cemetery?

So, checking carefully all around to see that "he" was not there, I knelt down and kissed her tombstone and thanked her for blessing me with such wonderful art, such hard-boiled wisdom, and such an eye for revelatory detail.

If I get to heaven, I'm going to have a lot of Saint Flannery reading to catch up on. I hope she doesn't forget the Cliff Notes™!

— Fr. Gregory Schweers

noteworthy

■ **JEFFERSON SCHOLAR:** Vincent Zimmern '06 accepted the Jefferson Scholarship, a four-year full scholarship to the University of Virginia.

■ **BOSTON MARATHON:** Fr. Bernard Marton (at right finishing the race) completed his first Boston Marathon. He ran in memory of his brother, Fr. Henry Marton.

■ **ALUMNI IN EDUCATION FOLLOW-UP:** Joe Roberts '89, who was included in our March 2006 edition, now teaches Spanish at R.L. Turner High School in Carrollton and lives in Dallas.

We failed to include John Harley Moody '88, who serves as the lead teacher for foreign languages at Chelsea High School in Chelsea, Massachusetts. Chelsea is an extremely diverse, mostly Hispanic immigrant community (42 nationalities are represented).

"Although it can be challenging at times," Moody said, "I absolutely love working with these kids."



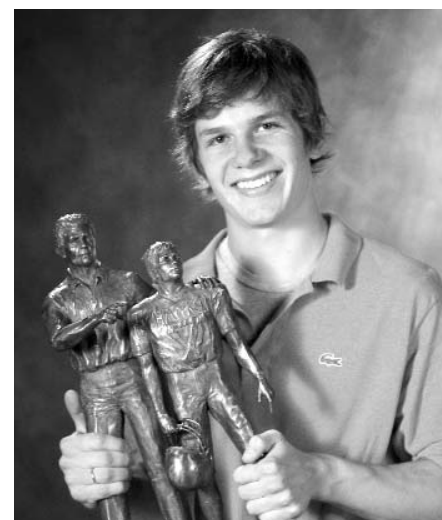
Commencement 2006

Commentator Weigel enlivens ceremonies

Nationally known Catholic commentator George Weigel entertained and enlightened the commencement crowd with stories about his relationship with Pope John Paul II.

Weigel's book, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* was published to international acclaim in the Fall of 1999 and has been translated into 11 languages.

The text of Weigel's commencement address may be found at www.cistercian.org. Look for the link on the school home page.



Hillary Award winner
Sam Bowler '06 won this year's Tom Hillary Award at the Athletic Banquet, signifying his academic excellence and many athletic contributions.

Twenty-five years of Fr. Gregory Schweers and Fr. Peter Verhalen '73

American monks help abbey and school turn the corner

On May 7, the Cistercian community celebrated a Mass of thanksgiving commemorating the Silver Anniversary of Fr. Gregory Schweers and Fr. Peter Verhalen '73 in the Abbey Church.

Since their ordination in 1981, the school and abbey have changed dramatically.

"Michael Schweers and Peter Verhalen entered the Monastery in 1975 at a time when many of us wondered if the Abbey was going to survive," recalled Fr. Roch Kereszty, who served as novice and junior master for the pair for six years during the seventies (see photos).

"I admired their courage and faith in God's providence. They were signs for us that God wants this Abbey to live.

"They helped me, personally, to find God's presence in our community and to discover such hidden treasures among us which enabled these two bright young men to take the risk of abandoning a promising future in the world."

"The last 25 years of the abbey's life into which these two priests have invested themselves – their time, their talent, their energy – were especially important," Abbot

Denis Farkasfalvy added in his homily at the Silver Jubilee Mass (see the entire text at www.cistercian.org/abbey/news).

"Since the ordination of Fr. Gregory and Fr. Peter, generations of students – altogether some 700 young men went through our school and carried with themselves the impact of these two priests' lives, words and

work, thought and influence."

"Our Abbey began to attract and gather around its ministry an increasing number of Catholics, young and old, our daily and weekly ministry became a steady influence in the Metroplex," said Abbot Denis, "and these two priests' lives and ministries became a most important bridge leading from the initial founding years of the monastery into a presence that is well-known as an important part of the church's life in Dallas."

"Another amazing fact about them," Fr. Roch pointed out, "is that in spite of their differences of approach and personality they have worked as a team, appreciating and supporting each other."

A quarter of a century means more than just achievements.

"There is hardly anything more important in the priestly way of life," said Abbot Denis, "than perseverance in order to express and signify God's fidelity to his salvation plan."

Their 25 years as priests, said the abbot, is "a gift of God's own abiding love."

"I am very grateful to God for both of them," added Fr. Roch.



THEN AND NOW (left to right) Fr. Roch Kereszty, Fr. Peter Verhalen '73, and Fr. Gregory Schweers.

1975



2006

Cistercian *and* technology

Fr. Peter is reviewing a variety of options to improve instruction through the application of technology ■ By David E. Stewart

THE SEVENTH-GRADE HOCKADAY GIRLS occasionally giggled and cut their eyes toward the rear of the classroom. But soon they grew accustomed to the novelty of having the Cistercian monk in their midst. Fr. Peter Verhalen '73 hardly noticed the small stir he created. He was sitting in on this history class (and several other classes at Hockaday) on this April morning to observe laptops and interactive white boards in action, and to analyze their impact on students, teachers, and the educational process.

The Dallas area offers a plethora of schools that employ high technology in the name of education and Fr. Peter is becoming familiar with most of them. He has been in contact with the director of technology at Ursuline, which has the country's second-oldest laptop program, and the director of technology at Cincinnati Country Day School, which has the oldest (next year will be their tenth year). Both schools have embraced tablet computers (laptops on which the monitors swivel and flip over to serve as writing surfaces).

Shelton and Hockaday also have implemented laptop programs. All three major Irving high schools have laptop programs as well. Bishop Dunne will provide next year's freshmen with iPods so that they

may receive pod-casts from their teachers. Dunne also will experiment with hand-helds (e.g., a Palm Pilot) for organizational purposes at the eighth grade level.

"I am just interested in technology if it helps the students learn more," said Fr. Peter, "and I am trying to understand better about how kids learn. But I don't want to jump on a bandwagon that's not going to help them learn more effectively."

"It sometimes seems that there are solutions out there searching for a problem," said Peter Billingham, Jesuit's director of technology, during a visit with Fr. Peter and Betty Sitton, who has served as Cistercian's director of technology for the past three years.

Technological innovations can become a crutch for teachers or even a marketing tool for admissions departments. That won't happen at Cistercian.

"The bottom line," said Fr. Peter, "is that this huge realm is opening up and we are doing our very best to exploit the technology, whether it is hardware or software, on a need-driven basis," he added.

"In the end," Fr. Peter suggested, "it comes down to a cost/benefit analysis."

To help identify the benefits of and measure the demand for educational technology, Fr.

Definitions

Educational technologies

Student e-mails: Institutional e-mail addresses (e.g., jdoe@cistercian.org) for each student.

Learning management systems: Software used by schools to administer communication between teachers and students, facilitating the posting of class content on the web. Can also be used for on-line courses.

Hard-wired/wireless: Infrastructure that describes how classrooms are connected to the Internet.

Interactive projection: Includes **a) interactive white boards**, which serve as "touch-screen" monitors (i.e., touching the screen acts like a mouse click) and a traditional white board (i.e., hand writing overlays any of the projected images), and **b) computer projection equipment used in conjunction with a tablet computer** (see definition below).

Non-interactive projection: Computer projection equipment operated by a PC or laptop.

Tablet computer: Laptop with a monitor that swivels and flips over so that it may be used like a writing tablet.

Peter initiated a Web poll of recent graduates and an informal survey of current teachers.

The results suggest that Cistercian may, in the near future, employ technology to promote classroom discussion, facilitate understanding, integrate important programs into the coursework, and build basic programming skills.

“There is not an ideal out there,” insisted Susan Bauer, director of technology at Ursuline Academy. “A school’s technology should match the school’s culture.”

At Cistercian, that translates into technologies that do not require large investments in hardware (e.g., laptops for every student) and that enhance the personal interaction between teachers and students.

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS and students outside of class is growing at all educational levels, and it is not just taking place in hallways or offices.

All of the comparable schools in the area (see the graphic below) employ a learning management system that administers and facili-

tates the creation of class Web sites (e.g., a Web site devoted to freshman English). Some of the common systems are Edline, First Class, Web CT, Blackboard, and others. They give teachers an effective two-way communication portal (i.e., allowing students to ask questions and receive answers), and provide an easy way to disseminate information, distribute hand-outs, assign homework, post teacher blogs (on-line journals), and more.

How common is this practice at the collegiate level?

Over 51 percent of the respondents in our young alumni survey reported that the majority (over 60 percent) of their college professors post blogs, class notes, and other materials on class Web sites.

That percentage jumps significantly if the elder statesmen are filtered out and we review the responses from only the Classes of 2004 and 2005. Nearly 67 percent of this younger group reported that the majority of their professors post blogs, class notes, and other materials on their Web sites, suggesting that this trend is growing.

Such a phenomenon prompts a predictable educational debate.

Should students nowadays simply be excused from taking notes since professors are posting their notes on the Web? Isn’t writing a

Technology in area schools

	E-COMMUNICATIONS		CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY			TOOLS
	Student e-mail	Learning mgt. system	Hardwired / wireless	Interactive projection *	Non-interactive projection**	Student laptops
Bishop Dunne	✓	✓	●	40%		
Cistercian			⊖		45%	
ESD	✓	✓	●	95%		
FWCD	✓	✓	●	15%	45%	
Greenhill	✓	✓	●	40%		
Hockaday	✓	✓	●	100%		📖
Jesuit		✓	●	100%		
Oakridge	✓	✓	⊖	25%		
Shelton	✓	✓	●	N.A.		📖
St. Marks'	✓	✓	●	15%	60%	
Trinity Valley	✓	✓	●	5%	70%	
Ursuline	✓	✓	●	67%		📖

● Both hardwired and wireless ⊖ Hardwired only

* Includes interactive white boards and projectors operated by tablet computers (percentage of classrooms)

** Computer projection equipment operated from a PC or laptop (percentage of classrooms).

Alumni speak out on te

ON POSTING CLASS

STUDENTS FAIL TO ENGAGE

“Students rely on them too much; fail to engage the material seriously. What they do learn, they don’t absorb. Most problematically, they don’t learn how to read or think.”

— William Umphres ’01
University of Virginia

proven form of building retention? Won’t students simply disengage from class if they can find the material outside of class?

“Posting lecture notes is problematic,” agrees William Umphres ’01, who graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in philosophy and politics. “Students rely on them too much; fail to engage the material seriously. What they do learn, they don’t absorb. Most problematically, they don’t learn how to read or think.”

Over 66 percent of our respondents, however, disagree. They rate class Web sites where class notes are posted as having a positive impact as it relates to promoting both learning and class discussion. Only 15 percent suggest that this practice has a negative impact. (The remaining respondents either said it has no impact or didn’t know.)

“I print out class notes before the class so that I am not hurrying to write everything down,” wrote Nicholas Queralt ’04, who is majoring in accounting at UT. “It allows me to focus on what the teacher is saying and then write quick clarifying notes.”

“It helps a lot because when you are studying you can simultaneously go through the slides and your notes that you took to supplement them,” added James Kahn ’01, who graduated from the UT Plan II honors program.

“Check out the Web site of Professor Michael Shanks (<http://metamedia.stanford.edu:3455/MichaelShanks/868>),” suggests Dave Daly ’01, who majored in political science at Stanford.

“I took two classes from him last year. The Web site is an essential and interactive part of the course. Notes for and about the lecture are posted on the site, both by the professor and by the students. Students can post questions, comments, pictures, links to other Web sites, etc.

“Beyond that, though, the students work on their final projects on the Web site, and classmates are expected to offer comments and ideas, and even to draw connections (in the form of links) between common themes in projects.”

Even without any help from the school, Cistercian students already are utilizing the Web to create forums for their forms in which they share notes, thoughts, assignments, post questions, and hold on-line discussions about each class.

Learning management systems would provide a number of very practical benefits for Cistercian students. With hand-outs always on the teachers’ Web sites, students will always know where they can put their hands on important documents (rather than rummaging through chaotic desks). And instead of elbowing their way around the Class Assignment Book, Cistercian students would simply be held responsible for checking the assignments on the class Web site.

DEATH BY POWERPOINT — no doubt an excruciatingly boring way to go. A number of our college-aged alumni suggest that PowerPoint presentations pose a serious threat to quality teaching and learning.

“In the Social Sciences and Humanities, technology is an absolute catastrophe in the classroom,” insists William Umphres. “There is a growing body of literature on what we might call ‘the PowerPoint effect;’ the two-sentence nature of PowerPoint confines thinking. Nuance and detail are lost.”

Others concur.

“I generally agree with Edward Tufte [Professor Emeritus at Yale] that PowerPoint presentations, if they are actually trying to communicate information rather than pictures, result in the dumbing down of the material (cf. his essay, *The Cognitive Style of PowerPoint*),” wrote Andrew Van Kirk ’00, who graduated from Duke with degrees in History and Computer Science. He is currently enrolled at the Princeton Theological Seminary.

But over 57 percent of our college-age respondents believe that computer projection and interactive white boards in their classrooms

or lecture halls has enhanced learning in 60 to 99 percent of the classes in which it was employed.

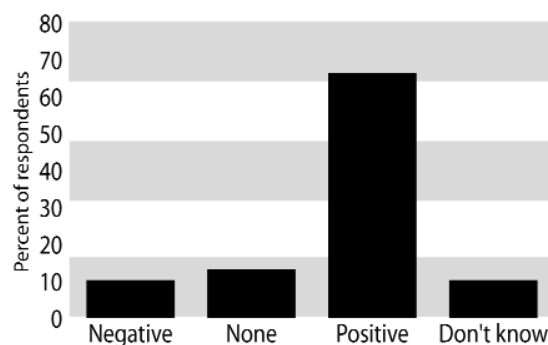
“In economics,” said Bayard Friedman ’03, an economics major at Duke, “we often deal with graphs or complex multi-step mathematical analyses. They have learning tools where you can click ‘next’ and see step-by-step the development of a graph or proof or statistical model.

“By allowing us to access the model on a computer, we can see step-by-step approaches much easier than can be shown in a text book graph. It is also easier to identify where the problem or confusion rests.”

“During a course in computer architecture,” recalled Tom Cecil ’01, who earned his degree in electrical and computer engineering from Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering, “our professor used a tablet computer to walk us through the logic used in a micro-processor. He would post those notes (a modified PowerPoint) to the course Web site for students to utilize while working on later assignments and labs.

“The benefit was that students would have a useful set of notes to refer to that involved extremely complex diagrams without slowing the class down — there was no way we could draw those systems in the time we had. We covered an immense body of material quickly and effectively.”

The impact of posting class notes on the web



Note: Two respondents skipped the this question.

About the

Our technology survey of recent alumni
Classes of 2000 through 2005. Seventy-t
72 hours. For more of the results, ple

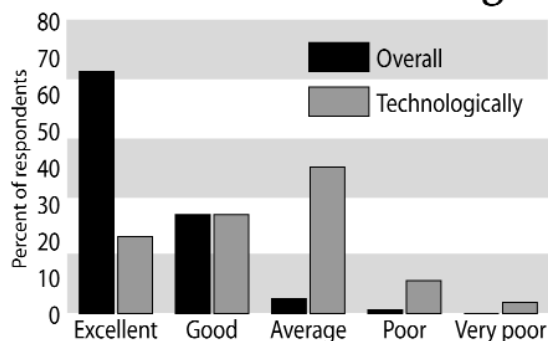
NOTES ON THE WEB

ALLOWS FOR BETTER FOCUS

"I print out class notes before the class so that I am not hurrying to write everything down. It allows me to focus on what the teacher is saying and write clarifying notes."

— Nick Queralt '04
University of Texas

The preparation Cistercian offers students for college



Note: One respondent skipped the overall question, two skipped the technological.

The survey

was sent in late May to members of the school. About two (about 28 percent) responded within a week. Please visit: www.cistercian.org/school.

"My favorite class was *Introduction to Perception*," said Chris Umphres '04, who is majoring in Aerospace Engineering at the University of Virginia. "The professor had a self-imposed rule to ensure that he didn't fall into the common habit of simply

reading from slides rather than teaching an interactive class with enriching discussion. He didn't allow any text on the slides.

"The PowerPoint was the best way to showcase the highly visual material to a large class size. He also showed videos and animations on the projection system to elaborate on interesting research projects and findings."

Based on the preponderance of the responses, it appears boring lectures should be blamed on boring teachers, not on PowerPoint. After all, we don't blame a boring television show on the TV. As teachers learn more each year about how to use software like PowerPoint, deaths by PowerPoint should be reduced significantly.

Over the past three years, Cistercian has put Sustentation dollars to work and installed computer projection equipment in the labs in the science building, small lecture hall, theater, music room and French room.

"Technology such as PowerPoint or Internet access is a great tool," said Umphres, "but should never take the place of a passionate and informed professor or restrict the freedom of the class to move in

unexpected directions."

"IF THERE IS A WAY TO GET MORE STUDENTS to learn how to program, it will be *very* helpful for most science, engineering and business majors," said James Peacock '04, who is majoring in Management Science (Corporate Finance Concentration) at MIT. "The fact that I knew how to program, even in a language that I no longer use, saved me a lot of time and stress."

"Dr. [Richard] Newcomb showed us some Mathematica for calculus," Peacock said, "however, we never had enough time to learn how to program with it."

"I suggest adding a pair of electives," wrote Ed Brophy '01, who graduated with a master's degree in mathematics from Texas A&M, "one focusing on business tech (Excel, PowerPoint, Access), and the other on engineering tech (TI-84, C++, Matlab...)"

In all, nearly 46 percent of our young alumni believe they would have "benefited from learning some programming skills at Cistercian." Many of the others, it appears, were content either to enter college without programming skills or to pick them up on their own, outside of school.

Nearly 93 percent rated their Cistercian education as either "excellent" or "good" for its overall preparation for college as compared to others at their institution.

When asked about how Cistercian prepared them technologically, nearly 48 percent rated it either "excellent" or "good." Forty percent rated it as average.

"I am interested in a blended approach," said Fr. Peter. "I believe we can improve the technology in our classrooms as we have in the science labs, theater, small lecture hall, music room, and French room under the intelligent and prudent leadership of Betty Sitton. This equipment is becoming better and less expensive every year."

"I also see the benefits of a learning management system that will facilitate teacher-student communication," he said.

"It is very important we ensure that any technology we implement preserves or even enhances our traditional pedagogical model," he insisted, "which is based on outstanding teachers who serve as role models while they inspire and connect with our students."

Betty Sitton, who spearheaded the installation of computer projection equipment in 45 percent of the classrooms as Cistercian's first director of technology, suggested to Fr. Peter that now was the time to appoint someone who could spend more time on this important issue and continue Cistercian's deliberate progress.

Fr. Peter has since named Craig Sklar to succeed Sitton and reduced his teaching load to create time for his new responsibilities as the school's new director of technology.

"Craig has worked in the software industry and will bring those skills and his buoyant enthusiasm to the job," said Fr. Peter. "I expect him to identify our options and to oversee the hardware side."

In addition, Fr. Peter added a new position and has hired Joe Christensen, a U.D. graduate with "a real sense for software" to fill it. Christensen will be responsible for helping teachers locate and learn how to use software and Internet resources.

"I don't think Fr. Peter should feel unnecessary pressures," said Dr. Peter Raad, Cistercian dad and the Linda Wertheimer Hart Director of the Hart eCenter at SMU. "Cistercian should pursue technology for the right reasons — for the boys — but there is no rush. Nothing has happened that we're that far behind."

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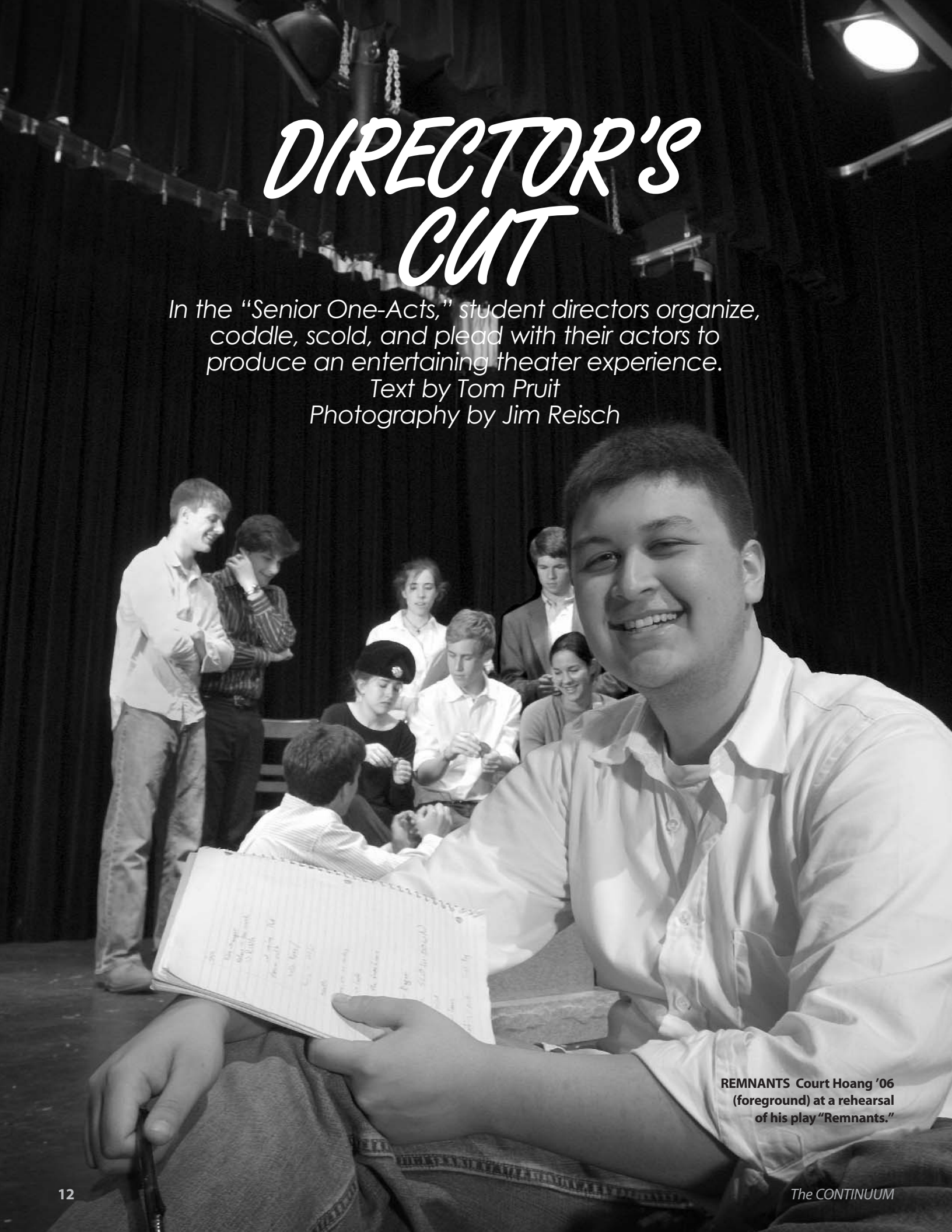
(Please visit www.cistercian.org/school for more results from the survey of young alumni, alternative pedagogical models, educational resources on the Web, and a discussion by Dr. Peter Raad of the benefits of applying video game technology to education.)

DIRECTOR'S CUT

In the "Senior One-Acts," student directors organize, coddle, scold, and plead with their actors to produce an entertaining theater experience.

Text by Tom Pruitt

Photography by Jim Reisch



REMNNANTS Court Hoang '06
(foreground) at a rehearsal
of his play "Remnants."

“Organizational skills are essential,” insisted Christine Medaille, long-time member of the English Department and a faculty sponsor for one of the three one-act dramas staged as senior projects this spring.

“The director must distribute scripts with all the inevitable changes,” Medaille added. “He must work with a variety of schedules – athletics, schoolwork, roles in other plays; he must find places to rehearse, construct a simple set, obtain costumes and props; he must work consistently with his faculty sponsor, fitting his or her busy schedule into the big picture; and he must cajole, admonish, and occasionally bribe cast members to be in character – and on time.

“There are, in fact, few senior projects that involve a greater diversity of tasks.”

Yet, despite all the attention to detail, the play remains a creative endeavor, a work of art.

“During the past three years, I’ve sponsored three senior one-acts and worked with four senior directors,” remarked Medaille. “What makes them so difficult also makes them so valuable for the students.”

“Writing this play was, in retrospect, the easy part, though at the time it seemed impossible,” remarked Court Hoang ’06, playwright and director of *Remnants*.

Matt Jones ’06, playwright and director of *A Story*, also realized the necessity of writing and casting the play early. Knowing since sophomore year that he wanted to do a one-act for his senior project, Jones first thought he’d write, cast, and produce the play during the fourth quarter.

“That was a very bad idea,” Jones acknowledged. “Even with the casting complete before the quarter began, we still almost ran out of time. It’s a very lengthy process; you can’t just decide at the last minute, ‘Oh, I think I’ll do a one-act.’”

This extraordinary commitment weighs not only on the director and playwright but on the sponsor as well. Most senior projects require a couple of extra class periods a week, but the one-acts require far more time of the sponsor. Rehearsals initially last for several hours several times a week. During the final week, rehearsals become a nightly affair.

“Directing is the hard part,” Jones reflected. “The scary part for me was knowing that my grade was in the hands of other

people. At a certain point (opening night, for instance), there was nothing else I could really do; it was all up to them.”

Hoang had an additional difficulty: five of his ten actors had never performed in a dramatic production on stage before.

“As director, it was my job to understand the play completely (which was easy since I was, after all, the playwright), to make the words on the page a reality, to help the actors understand the play and its themes, and, finally, to make the whole thing look pretty.”

Though quite frustrating at times, having to work with first-time actors taught Hoang a great deal about his craft.

“The most common misconception about acting, especially common with inexperienced actors, is that it is dishonest—that the actors wear masks on the stage to try to ‘fool’ the audience,” he said.

“My greatest challenge in this production was helping the actors understand their characters on a deep, personal level. My goal was to get each actor to the point where he was not ‘pretending’ to be the character, but knew him so well that he can become the character. Acting, when done well, is really one of the most honest things a person can do.”

Travis LaMothe ’06 was one of the first-time actors with whom Hoang worked.

“Court was patient, and had a passion for his play,” LaMothe said. “I think this passion was perceptible to the cast. It certainly motivated me to work as often as I could on fitting into the role of my character.”

LaMothe went on to compare his experi-

ence in working on his own senior project (which combined gardening and his original painting), with observing Hoang on his project.

“Both Court’s and my senior projects were artistic endeavors,” he reflected. “Mine, though, was a very independent experience. To ensure that everything went as planned, I had to work on my project in my spare time. Court, on the other hand, had to work on ensuring that his cast worked on his project in their spare time. Sounds confusing, but basically the final result was not in Court’s hands. It takes a great deal of patience to work with the people in whose voices and actions your art will be heard and seen.”

While directing the actors put the director in the role of teacher, working side by side with the faculty sponsor put him more into the role, not of student but of collaborator. Hoang worked with Jackie Greenfield, head of the English Department.

“Mrs. Greenfield let me keep my independence,” Hoang said. “I never once felt that the show was in anyone’s hands but mine – but she knew just when to intervene to keep me sane.”

Hoang has more to say about the specifics of their interaction, expressing gratitude to her for her practical help as well in brainstorming ideas about how to finish the play, in where to find an actual grave-stone, the central prop in his set, and in giving him perspective on the play as a whole.

“I think the most important thing she did for me, though, was helping me keep my

JONES’ STORY The cast of *A Story* (left to right on the couch) Phillip Schnorbach ’08, Elizabeth Elliot (Ursuline), Maria Garnett (Ursuline), Grant Van Kirk ’06, with playwright and director Matt Jones (standing in back).



head on straight throughout the process. She was a joy to work with, and to talk to, and without her to keep my spirits up and keep me focused, I don't know what this production would have been."

"Directing a play is one thing, but being the playwright as well as the director is quite another," reflected Jackie Greenfield. "Court, it seemed to me, was quite emotionally vested in the themes of his 'baby.' I had to remind him to think of the themes of his play – what could he take away from his own play and apply to his own situation? I think I got his attention at that point. He seemed calmer."

As the show neared opening night and hadn't yet come together, Hoang grew tenser. "At one point – the day before the first performance – I had to tell Court that he needed to thank his actors for being in his play. He was letting himself get too tense about their performances.

"He was always very demanding, wanting to get the best performance from each actor, but on this particular night, when someone forgot to remove a prop before the next scene, he picked it up himself and threw it off stage. It wasn't until the next day that I realized that Court was working with five actors who had never been on stage before. Now that's pressure!"

Greenfield, however, also learned a great deal from Court, particularly in the questions he would ask his actors in order to get them to figure out what they really thought about a character's motivation in a particular line or scene.

"I was amazed at the quality of Court's questions as he worked with his actors. I have to say that working with his actors gave Court an opportunity to put into effect everything he has learned through his varied roles in numerous productions."

Andrew Gregg '01, who worked with Jones on *A Story*, describes a different aspect of the sponsor-director relationship.

"As a sponsor, and new faculty member," Gregg said, "I found the greatest mental challenge for me was resisting the urge to take charge. I repeatedly told myself, and told Matt, that this was his project, and that he would have to come up with the

The layers of watching –
I watched [James]
as he watched the
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reminded me that these
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— Chris Medaille

questions and most of the answers himself. I think Matt found my evasiveness aggravating on some occasions, but I know that the final product means much more to him because I did not focus constantly on how much I could influence him, on how much I could teach him directly."

The proof, of course, is in the pudding, and this is nowhere more apparent than in a dramatic production. The weeks of rehearsals become a public performance, and its fate lies in the reactions of the audience. For the director, and the sponsor guiding him, this is the most intense, and most telling moment.

Medaille recalls watching James West '06, director of *The Box*, during the final performance.

"The layers of viewing – I watched him as he watched the audience members who were completely enthralled by the play – reminded me that these projects offer so much more than a simple good grade; they allow the director to hear the applause as the curtain goes down and reap the compliments as the lights go up. And that ending makes all the effort worthwhile."

Greenfield was very impressed with the cooperation and collaboration between the

three directors.

"It became clear early on that two directors really wanted the same actor," Greenfield recalled. "One withdrew his request, however, because the other director had fewer actors, and his play really depended on the type of performance the seasoned actor could deliver."

"These boys who love drama," she added, "know very well the magic that happens when an attentive audience and prepared actors converge. There were mutual backslappings of sweaty directors Friday night—they were all so happy. So much work, so much satisfaction."

Hoang found the real success of the senior project in what he learned about himself and the craft he loves.

"Acting is ridiculously easy in comparison to directing," he insisted. "Directing is also so much more rewarding, personally, and much less rewarding outwardly. The audience doesn't applaud the director."

"If my actors succeed, I succeed, and in *Remnants*, I passed with flying colors because they did," he suggested. "They gave me every bit of focus and obedience I asked for – and I demanded a lot – and I hope I helped them actualize at least some of the amazing potential I saw in each of them. My experience in directing has taught me, above all else, the joy of teaching and of seeing someone else succeed because of something I've done."

Will Arbery '07, who wrote the play *The Box*, collaborated closely with director James West '06 throughout the process of producing the play. He found the experience difficult and draining, and frustrating at times, but in the end, purely exhilarating.

"It's hard to expose your bare, personal work to an audience like that," Arbery admitted. "I was very unsure about it until the end. We worked so hard with all the actors, and I seriously felt such deep pride in all of them as I watched them grow as actors.

"But everything, from the costumes to the lighting to the script (which wasn't finalized until a week before we opened), to finding their characters, to having to cut a cast member two days before we opened, to hearing the laughter of the audience when it all came to an end, contributed to one of the most challenging, exhilarating, unrelenting, educational, and spiritually rewarding endeavors I've ever taken part in."

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WEST'S BOXERS James West '06 (far right) with the cast of "The Box," (top, left to right) David Pruit '06, Will Arbery '07, Daniel Stewart '08, Paul DiFiore '09, and (bottom) Scott Kinard '08.



Hawks run away with third place finish at SPC

The 2006 Hawks track team put its stamp on a year in which they broke several records and placed third at SPC, tying for the best finish in school history.

Greg Wallingford '06, **David Haley '06**, **Kerr Friedman '07**, and **Matthew Abola '07** flew to a 43.7 time at the Cistercian Relays, inching past the 2003 team that featured Haley (then a freshman), **Michael Tinker '03**, **Alex Gette '03**, and **Tyler Bethea '03**.

The 2006 team placed fourth at SPC.

The 4x400m team, composed of Abola, **Tom Davey '07**, Haley, and **Sam Bowler '06**, set the school record with a 3:22.7 at the Cistercian Relays, beating the 3:24.4 time of the 1989 team that included **Alex Lopez '89** and **John Michael Stewart '89**.

At SPC, the 2006 4x400m team took first place with 3:24.30 time.

"The mile relay team never trailed once in the six meets we ran this year," said Head Coach Steve McCarthy. "By the time Sam took the baton (for the anchor leg), we were somewhere between 40 and 50 meters ahead."

David Haley played key roles on both record-setting relay teams.

"David has been a mainstay of the track team since his freshman year," said

McCarthy. Haley ran the 100 (ninth at SPC), 200, 4x100, 4x400.

Cistercian's other first-place finish came courtesy of Bowler, who dominated the 800 at SPC the way he had in every other meet this year, running a 1:59.45.

Bowler accounted for a team-high 25 points (out of Cistercian's 92 points at SPC) with a second place in the 400 and his part in the fifth place finish of the 4x800m relay.

"Sam is a hard-working young man who found his niche as a runner and took full advantage of it," said McCarthy.

Gabi Ferenczi '06, who was nearly unbeatable all season in the 110 high hurdles, succumbed to St. Mark's superb Shawn Schmidt, who will compete as a decathlete next year for the University of Texas. (Schmidt won the 110 high hurdles, long jump, high jump, placed second in the discus and fourth in the shot at SPC).

"Gabi was the best hurdler we've had at

Photo courtesy of David Haley



SPC TRIUMPH David Haley '06 drives home on the second leg of Cistercian's first place finish in the 4 x 400m relay at SPC.

Cistercian since Alex Lopez in the eighties," McCarthy said.

"This senior class worked extremely hard and it paid off with our best finish at SPC in almost twenty years," McCarthy added.

Individual efforts stand out for baseball team

With only two seniors and a lack of depth in the pitching staff, the 2006 Hawks fought an uphill battle all season. But the grit of this group of Hawks provided some fireworks against top teams.

The Hawks were down 5-1 against highly ranked Covenant Christian Academy going into the sixth inning, but Cistercian rallied behind the bats of **H.T. Flanagan '07** (2-4, with a double and a triple and two RBI) and **Jack Squiers '08** (2-3, with a double and two RBI) to salvage a 6-5 win.

Against St. Mark's, the Hawks fell behind 14-4, but fought back valiantly, just falling short, 14-10. "We just ran out of juice," said Head Coach Mark Gray.

"The boys' ability to come back and to overcome adversity says a lot about the character of the boys," Gray added.

Hope for next year will be fueled by the likes of first baseman **Chase Campbell '07**, who emerged as a force at the plate, improving his batting average from .250 last year

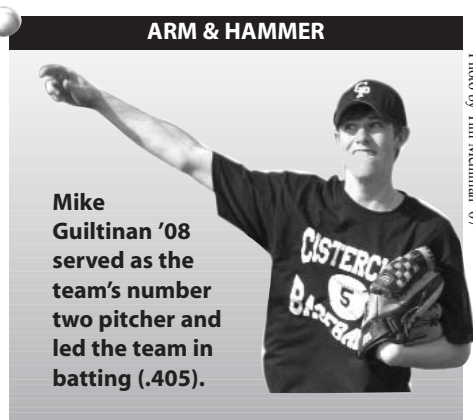


Photo by Tim Mehnhan '07

to .382 this year.

Behind the plate, **Patrick Flanagan '07** has started on the varsity since he was a freshman and continues to anchor the team while contributing a .365 batting average.

Mike Guiltinan '08 provided the season's most pleasant surprise. The quiet sophomore lets his bat do his talking. His .405 batting average led the team. He also served as the team's number two pitcher.

The team's number one pitcher, H.T. Flanagan, led the team with a 3.18 ERA.

With the return of these veteran players and with an influx of younger talent, Gray views next year's prospects optimistically.

Tennis program matures, reaches SPC-I tourney

Led by the outstanding play of All-SPC performers **Will Beuttenmuller '06** and **Winston Rice '07**, the 2006 Hawks tennis team reached the SPC Division I tournament.

Beuttenmuller, who plans to play tennis at Princeton next year, lost only one regular season match. Rice served as the number two singles player.

Devin Jourde '07 teamed with **Bobby Crews '06** on the Hawks' number one doubles team while **Clint Murchison '08** and **Charlie Hoedebeck '08** performed well as the team's number two doubles team.

But perhaps even more encouraging for tennis' future at Cistercian was the size of this year's squad. When over 30 tried out, Athletic Director Dan Lee decided to allow the team to grow to 18 by keeping a developmental squad in addition to the core players.

"I think by training developmental players, we have taken an important step towards building a tennis program," said Head Coach Skip Boyden.

Religion cannot be reduced to the Golden Rule

“Our world and its cities are extremely and increasingly violent. Have you noticed: much of the death, destruction and division follows almost gleefully in the wake of one religion or the other, including mine and including yours.



On Prayer

Fr. Roch Kereszty

I’ve been wondering. What if all religion and every “important” question associated with religion and the theologies of the various religions were done away with except for one?

What if God and God’s will were reduced to one single directive, just one? ‘Do to others what you want them to do to you.’”

One of our alumni recently sent me this quote while expressing his (initial) admiration for its wisdom. This alumnus is a faithful Catholic with eight years of

Religion/Theology courses at Cistercian. I kept wondering: if even this deeply religious young man was so thoroughly taken (for a while) by the half-truths of such a statement, what do the rest of you think? Are you also enthusiastic about this “true religion in simple human terms” or (what I would like to hope) you have mixed feelings and critical reservations?

The world is indeed becoming more and more violent, acts of nuclear, biochemical terrorism may occur any day. Some say that a major catastrophe is imminent. It is also true that violence and terrorism are presently, to a large extent, religiously motivated. The statement, however, that every religion with a definite creed occasions or causes “death, destruction and division” may only be excused by a thorough ignorance of history.

Christians today are rather the sufferers than the perpetrators of violence, even though it was not always so. From time to time Christians did engage in bloody wars, torture, slave trade and the like. However, they did it against the teaching of their own religion which admits only a just war of self-defense and gives pride of place in its moral teaching to the love of the enemy.

Do you know that Pius VII was kidnapped and kept under house arrest by Napoleon because he refused to join the blockade of Protestant England? Do you realize that Pius IX was forced to escape from his own people in Rome because he refused to take up arms against the emperor of Austria? Are you aware that according to Jewish sources Pius XII and the Catholic Church in Europe saved more than half a million Jewish lives during World War II?

You want to do away with “every important question associated with religion and the theologies of the various religions” except the Golden Rule. Do you notice the hidden hubris and the narrow bias behind such an apparently enlightened attitude? Without examining them, you assume that all belief systems are equally fallible (and even noxious) human fabrications that should be done away with. What if one of them – say, Christianity – is not a man-made religion but is given to us by God himself? What if in other religions we also find seeds of God’s wisdom

even if mixed with human errors? Do you reject all truths and keep only that one Rule? In your broad-minded tolerance you deny the right to God to reveal and communicate to us the fullness of his love. And you do so because the acceptance of such revelation creates a distinct religion that differs from others? Would you allow God only one directive, that of the Golden Rule? Don’t you see your thinly disguised will to overpower God himself and at the same time masquerade as a peacemaker?

Evidently, Christianity does include in its teaching the Golden Rule, but it calls for infinitely more than this minimum standard of morality: “Love your enemies... that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good;” “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect;” “Love one another as I have loved you” (Mt 5:44-45, 48; Jn 13:32).

These are Jesus’ directives. However, the love of Jesus is inseparable from his person. And the mystery of his person is inseparable from the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Thus, the mystery of Jesus’ love implies the totality of the Christian mystery. In Jesus we encounter not just a great philanthropist, but the infinite gift of God the Father who handed over to us his own Son in order to save his renegade creatures from self-destruction.

Take away just one truth of the Catholic Christian Faith and the fullness of God’s love for us suffers truncation or distortion. For example, if you downgrade the Eucharist to a mere psychological remembrance, you downgrade the efficacy of Jesus’ love: you refuse to believe that his love is almighty enough to give us his very self, his crucified and glorified humanity and divinity, in the most intimate way that is possible for a human being on earth.

So, if God revealed himself in Christ, we should ponder and guard every truth of the Christian mystery which is the growing, unfolding articulation of the one basic truth

that “God is love” (1Jn 4:16), as Pope Benedict has so beautifully shown us in his first encyclical.

At the same time we should rejoice that every major religion has the Golden Rule in some form or another. For us Catholic Christians, this is a sign that God’s grace is at work everywhere, that his call to change and renew our lives is offered to every human being. (Of course, the principle “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is an expression of true love only if your motivation is the well-being of the other person rather than just an exercise of enlightened self-interest.” I treat others fairly so that they may treat me fairly.”) However, the more we receive from God, the more we are obliged to Him.

We Catholic Christians were made aware of the “breadth and length and height and depth” of God’s love for us in Christ Jesus (Eph 3:18), therefore we cannot not embrace this fullness. Jesus ordered his disciples to gather every fragment that was left over after the multiplication of the loaves “so that nothing will be wasted” (Jn 6:12).

The Word of God, the truths of his revelation, are infinitely more precious than the crumbs of the five barley loaves. We should not knowingly throw away even the smallest fragment of his Word.

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Technology? I'll take my 40-year-old Land Rover

Now, I am nearly a Luddite. When I was told the main feature for this issue of *The Continuum* was focusing on “the future of technology at Cistercian,” I groaned.

“The beginning of the end,” I thought, “as CPS marches into the mainstream and in the process loses sight of that which makes it great.”



Afterthoughts
Smokey Briggs '84

Luddites were folks so opposed to technological advances that they formed militias and burned mills and such to the ground in England early in the 1800s.

Of course, they had a reason – the machines in those mills were taking their jobs, and like most people, burning the thing down seemed a better option than adapting to a changing world.

Actually, I'm not really a Luddite. What I am is very skeptical of technology as the cure to what ails you.

It is common knowledge that I like occasionally to get as far away from the rest of the human race as possible. As I have a wife, three daughters, and two dogs, such trips now require motorized transportation.

My choice of off-road transportation is a 1960s, nearly stock, Land Rover. She-who-must-be-obeyed, AKA my lovely wife Laura, describes it lovingly as a “tractor with doors.”

Well, sometimes, I take the doors off.

It is the epitome of simplicity. It is slow, underpowered, un-air-conditioned, un-radioed, un-GPSed, un-posi-tracked, uncomfortable, and unbreakable. A moron (like me) with a Swiss Army knife and a crescent wrench can overhaul it in the bush.

It will run on two cylinders, on bad gas, with a cracked head. Ask me how I know. It has a hand-crank if the battery fails.

You will come home in the Land Rover.

I cannot say the same about SWMBO's shiny, 4WD Suburban with computer-controlled engine, posi-track, AC, CD.... If that sucker quits running you better have some hiking boots in the back.

Occasionally I meet fellow travelers on trails. Often they are equipped with the latest and greatest mud monster ever produced. A computer controls tire pressure, fuel mixture, cabin temperature, gear selection, timing, and even directs the driver to his destination.

To accomplish the same functions I use a tire gauge, screwdriv-

er, windows, a gearshift, my highly trained ear and SWMBO occasionally forces me to look at a map.

Their truck gets wet and the vacation is over.

The Rover gets wet and my girls are simply thankful for the brief bit of evaporative cooling supplied by something other than dog slobber.

And, there are darn few places the super-trucks will go that the Rover cannot – and sometimes the Rover is actually a better performer due to great low-end torque, low overall weight, and a small footprint.

The Rover does the job I want done better than anything produced since. It gets me there, and it gets me home. It does so economically, and by my strange standards, in style.

It is the right tool for the job.

I would approach technological advances at Cistercian with the same jaundiced eye I reserve for jacked up boulevard trucks with lots of chrome – is it a better tool for the job at hand?

Now if the job at hand is cruising Sonic and impressing the girls, well maybe the hi-jacked Ford is the right tool.

But, maybe not. SWMBO fell for me in a 1946 Chevy pickup with no floorboard. The good ones don't care.

But, for pure get-me-way-out-and-bring-me-home the Rover is the right choice, every time.

What Cistercian does is teach.

In my experience, teaching is not easy, but neither is it complicated. The only tool that really matters is the teacher. Everything else, from blackboard to PowerPoint presentation, is extra.

It might be nice, but it is not necessary, and it might even be a distraction that gets in the way of the original mission – teaching.

We all have to live with budgets. I could buy, or finance, a jacked up, super cool, Ford F-250, 4wd, Powerstroke diesel, complete with GPS, Warn wench, AC, CD, and heated seats.

But, after the payment, I could not afford the gas to go anywhere, and if it broke down, the tow bill would break me.

The Rover is paid for, works like a charm, always gets the job done, and leaves plenty of money in the checkbook for petrol.

And she will take me to all the same places the new Ford would.

CPS has a budget too. Every dime spent on technology is a dime that cannot be spent on a teacher. It is a zero sum game.

Teachers are the fuel that power schools.

An old Land Rover and plenty of gas will get you farther down the trail than a computerized Ford with an empty tank.

email: smokey@pecos.net

calendar

June

- 2-4 Renunions Weekend with Hawks' Hoops, Family Picnic, Mass, and Alumni Brunch

August

- 17 Varsity football scrimmage v. Greenhill
- 12 Used book/uniform sale
- 22 Opening Ceremonies
- 23 Classes begin

September

- 4 Labor Day holiday

October

- 20 Homecoming vs. ESD

CISTERCIAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED