


For family, friends, & alumni of Cistercian Preparatory School

CISTERCIAN IRVING, TEXASONTINUUM

Spring 2016

INSIDE

Improvements
at the abbey to
magnify the
Cistercians'
presence



NEW
FACE
of
TECH



Laura and Louie Tomaso, parents of Paul Tomaso '80 and grandparents of Michael '06, Luke '12, and Sam '14.

Dedicated to Education

“Mom and dad played an active role at every school that they’ve been associated with,” said Paul Tomaso ’80 of his parents Louie and Laura Tomaso. “My dad grew up in Dallas during the Depression. He understood life could be hard and that education was the way to move up in the world.”

Louie Tomaso, a successful entrepreneur, did move up. “They always wanted to give back,” Tomaso added, “especially in the form of scholarships so that education wouldn’t be limited by one’s finances.

“Through the Memorare Society, my mom and dad have done that. Even though they are no longer with us, they continue to make an impact by helping families afford a Cistercian education.

“I am happy they’re remembered for that by the school and by the monks.”

MEMORARE
SOCIETY

To remember Cistercian with a planned gift, contact Erin Hart.
469-499-5406 | ehart@cistercian.org



CISTERCIAN PREPARATORY SCHOOL

Rev. Paul McCormick
Headmaster

Greg Novinski '82
*Assistant Headmaster
Head of Upper School*

Christine Medaille
Head of Middle School

Jim Taylor
Director of Admissions

Peter Saliga
Director of College Counseling

Erin Hart
*Director of Development
and Alumni Relations*

André Bruce
Director of Athletics & Physical Education

Tony Johnston '05
*President, Cistercian
Alumni Association*

School Board

Rt. Rev. Peter Verhalen '73
Rev. Thomas Esposito
Rev. Roch Kereszty
Rev. Robert Maguire
Rev. Bernard Marton
Rev. Paul McCormick
Kent Clay
Mike Donahoe '80
Charles Lipscomb '84
Kathleen A. Muldoon
Peter P. Smith '74
Jere W. Thompson, Jr. '74

CONTINUUM

David E. Stewart
david@yardstick.co

Erin Hart
Alumni Relations

Jim Reisch
Photography Editor

CONTINUUM is published
twice a year (spring & fall)
by Cistercian Preparatory School.

3660 Cistercian Road
Irving, TX 75039
469-499-5400

www.cistercian.org

A vine not out of Egypt, but out of Hungary

Provisionally brought out of Hungary and transplanted into the hard-clay soil of Irving over 54 years ago, the vine of Cistercian continues to send down ever-deepening roots as it



Letter from the headmaster
Fr. Paul McCormick

provides both the School and the Abbey with remarkable and surprising fruit. As highlighted in our cover article, recent changes to our senior curriculum have inspired an abundance of fruitful discovery among our students. Collaborating in small groups to experience college-style inquiry and research in their preferred academic disciplines, seniors not only examined the philosophic questions in contemporary society but also unleashed a wave of innovative and sophisticated STEAM* projects from homemade drones and virtual reality goggles to integrated synthetic sound for video gaming and art installations exploring prejudices. The rich fruit of the Cistercian vine can also be seen as “filling the land” in the

“You brought a vine out of Egypt and planted it. You cleared out what was before it; it took deep root and filled the land.” Ps 80:9

many other accomplishments of our current students and alumni around the country highlighted in this edition.

In the Abbey, as well, who could have imagined the abundant fruitfulness of the young monks now maturing in their ministries placing

such significant demands on the physical plant of the Abbey? As our story on changes to the Abbey explains, so many requests are now coming in from Cistercian families, alumni, and the larger community for spiritual direction and sacramental preparation that additional spaces must be created to meet these increasing needs.

Yet, even when celebrating the expansive growth and fruitfulness of our Cistercian vine, Fr. Roch in his concluding piece wisely notes the need for all of us to remain connected to the earth and ultimately to our origins. As a consequence, it is a tremendous blessing that these changes to the Abbey will include a crypt to remember those founding members of the School and Abbey whose sacrifice, vision, and faith first planted such a fruitful vine in Texas. We will honor them by bringing their remains to rest next to the Abbey Church and hill where it all began so long ago.

* STEAM = STEM + Arts

Volume 43, number 1

In this issue



Magnifying the presence

8

Improvements coming to the abbey



A night to remember

14

Departments

News & Notes.....	4-7
Sports.....	24
Class Notes.....	25-26
Afterthoughts by <i>Smokey Briggs</i> .	27
On Prayer by <i>Fr. Roch Kereszty</i>	28

Cover photography by
Jim Reisch



16

A more supportive curriculum has helped tech-focused members in the Class of '16 thrive

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, & offering them guidance with both understanding & discipline. Cistercian Preparatory School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national, or ethnic origin in the administration of its admission & education policies, financial aid programs, athletic programs, & other activities.

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR Capasso honored at Jim & Lynn Moroney Award dinner

Joe Capasso '88 was honored as the 2016 alumnus of the year on January 30, in a hilarious and moving Jim & Lynn Moroney Award ceremony at the Park City Club.

The laughs were provided by classmate and best friend **Tim Rogers '88**, who had teamed with Capasso in 2010 to co-introduce that year's alumnus of the year, **Matt Hawkins '88**.

But "stranded" in Napa Valley, Rogers asked Hawkins to read his mischievous remarks (see "Moroney Dinner 2016" on the Cistercian Dallas YouTube channel for a good laugh).

Hawkins then shared some examples of Capasso's giving nature.

After graduating from Cistercian, Capasso lost his father. He decided to stay home to take care of his mom and brother **Mark Capasso '90**,



2016 Alumnus of the Year Joe Capasso '88 (center) with classmates Mark Roppolo '88 (left) and Matt Hawkins '88 at the Jim & Lynn Moroney Award Dinner in January.

postponing plans to attend Syracuse University (he graduated from UT Austin instead).

He mentioned Capasso's work as a teacher and a physician's assistant, his years as a Cistercian parent (**Nicholas Capasso '13**), and his years volunteering as a soccer coach at Cistercian.

When brother Mark called with news that he needed a kidney transplant, Joe volunteered to donate his kidney on the spot.

In accepting the award, Capasso reflected on all Cistercian had taught him.

In particular, he cited lessons learned from Tom Hillary ("What would the big man do?") and Fr. Henry Marton, his form master ("gentle, understanding, firm but encouraging").

"Cistercian," Capasso concluded, "is my touchstone, my home base, my center."

ART BRIEFS

Dooder and the Lighthouse, a documentary by **Clayton Long '00** and his wife Lisa, was selected as the grand prize winner from the Gasparilla International Film Festival.

Darryl Ratcliff '04 recently won the Arch and Anne Giles Kimbrough Award from the DMA.

Travis Lamothe '06 and **Patrick Romeo '06** exhibited their work in May at the Beefhaus (an exhibit space near Fair Park).

ALCALA '09, RYAN '11 TO MOVE ON AFTER RETURN TO CAMPUS

Math teacher and student council sponsor **T.J. Alcalá '09** is leaving Cistercian after two years to teach math at the Cristo Rey New York High School, a Catholic, co-ed, college-prep school.

Patrick Ryan '11, who taught science (II) this year, will attend The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

PLANTING TREES IN DISASTER AREAS

Retreet is a non-profit founded by documentary filmmaker **Grady McGahan '00** that plants trees in areas hit by disasters. It is now raising funds for a fall planting in Rowlett, which was struck by tornados in December. Go to retreet.org if you'd like to contribute.

St. Andrews alumni welcome Saliga to Scotland

Peter Saliga enjoyed a reunion with the five alumni who are studying at the University of St Andrews while at a recent College Counselor's Conference in Scotland.



(Standing) Conner McCain '14, Antanas Madhavapeddy '13, Cristian Yost '15, and Drew Roberts '12; (sitting) Peter Saliga, Cistercian college counselor, and Connor Roberts '12.

Drew Roberts '12, **Connor Roberts '12**, **Antanas Madhavapeddy '13**, **Conner McCain '14**, and **Cristian Yost '15** proved to be welcoming hosts and knowledgeable ambassadors.

They escorted Saliga on a walk on the Old Course — the birth place of golf — and the equally famous West Sands (of *Chariots of Fire* fame) and attended a concert to enjoy an original Conner McCain composition performed professionally for the first time.

The group dined together and tasted whisky under the guidance of Drew and Conner Roberts, both of whom serve as tour guides at local distilleries.

"It was a pleasure talking, laughing, and sharing so much with five former students and advisees," said Saliga.

9 The number of alumni from the eighties who have been named alumnus of the year after **Joe Capasso '88** won this year. The 70s claim 13 winners, the 90s: 2.

5 The number of Cistercian alumni attending the University of St. Andrews this year. **Drew Roberts '12** and **Connor Roberts '12** graduate in June.



The Hungarian Ambassador to the US, Dr. Réka Szemerkenyi, visits with (l-r) Fr. Julius Leloczky, Fr. Roch Kereszty, and Abbot Peter Verhalen '73 in Founders Hall on May 7.

HUNGARIAN DELEGATION Ambassador tours campus

Dr. Réka Szemerkenyi, the Hungarian ambassador to the US, toured the Cistercian campus on May 7, along with family members and a small delegation.

The ambassador spends much of her time traveling to the Hungarian Diaspora in the U.S. Her trip to DFW included a visit with the Hungarian Club and a speech at the Rotary Club of Fort Worth.

Szemerkenyi and representatives from the local Hungarian club toured the abbey and prep school to see how much Hungarians have accomplished here.

REMEMBERING

Fr. Ralph March



“Fr. Ralph went almost everywhere,” said **Fr. Augustine Hoelke '00** in his memorial, “did almost everything, and met almost everyone. He spoke six languages, and managed to express his sharp wit and good humor in all of them.

“I see him now as a man who was deeply impressed by God’s riches in Creation.”

Including Cuban cigars, cognac, wine, opera, and, of course, Gregorian chant, add-

ed Fr. Gregory Schweers.

“For him,” said Fr. Gregory, “sacred music was less about the performance than it was about the liturgy and worship.”

Born only miles from the Austrian border, the alumnus of the Cistercian school of Szent Imre in Budapest was ordained at the Abbey of Zirc on the final day of World War II in Europe.

In Paris, he studied French and Music, earned a master’s of chant at the Sorbonne, and penned a dissertation for his Ph.D. that continues to be foundational for chant studies.

In 1956, he served on the first faculty at the University of Dallas (where he continued to teach for decades) and participated in the founding of the Cistercian Monastery Our Lady of Dallas.

He worked at St. Bernard’s Parish and directed choirs, his life’s passion. From 1966-1974, he served as editor of the quarterly *Sacred Music*, the oldest magazine of church music in the U.S.

In 1977, he was recruited to serve as music director of the prestigious Cologne Cathedral in Germany. In 1987, he became pastor in Landsberg am Lech in Germany and taught music history.

Fr. Ralph “retired” to his monastery in Dallas in 2000, where he continued teaching at the University of Dallas and, in cooperation with Marilyn Walker, taught and conducted Gregorian chant for the Collegium Cantorum for the following twelve years.

He died at the age of 93 on February 6, 2016, surrounded by the monks who had grown to love him so dearly.

Jane Bret



Helen Jane Bret passed away on December 31, 2015. Seeking a better education for her three boys, this Louisiana native set in motion events that would result in the founding of the Cistercian Preparatory School in 1962. She was studying history at the University of Dallas to complete her degree when she confided to Fr. Louis Lékai in late 1959, “We don’t have any place to send our boys before they reach high school. We need a school like Ursuline for boys.” All three of her sons — Billy, Bobby, and Paul — would attend Cistercian.

Gene Vilfordi



Gene Vilfordi, father of **Marc Vilfordi '76**, passed away March 21, 2016. A Merrill Lynch broker who rose to First Vice President—Investments, Senior Financial Advisor in his 51 years with the company, he was asked to join the Cistercian School Board in the early seventies and became the first investment advisor for the abbey and school. Vilfordi served many Catholic charities and on the governing boards of UD and Ursuline as well as Cistercian. He planted the pecan tree in the abbey courtyard years ago.

Leonard “Lynn” Northrup, Jr.



Leonard L. Northrup Jr., grandfather of **J.D. Northrup '96** and **Robert Northrup '00**, passed away on March 24, 2016.

The inventor-entrepreneur was behind 14 patents and the catalyst behind others from automobile air conditioning to solar energy.

His offer to underwrite limestone for the abbey church from his West Texas quarry completely altered the thinking on the design. “We could not even have dreamed of a church built of stone without this gift,” said Abbot-Emeritus Denis Farkasfalvy.

9 The number of Cistercian monks on the first faculty of the University of Dallas. Fr. Ralph March, who passed away in February, was the last surviving member.

427 The number of 2’ x 3’ x 6’ limestone blocks, donated by Lynn Northrup, Jr. (from his West Texas quarry), used to build the abbey church.



Fr. Thomas Esposito
leading a group along the
Stations of the Cross trail on
Good Friday, 2016.

Magnifying the presence

The success of the Cistercians has never depended on their facilities. But improvements underway to the original monastery — 25 years after the opening of the abbey church — will add conveniences for the public and multiply the effectiveness of the monks.

By David Exall Stewart



THAT'S FR. THOMAS ESPOSITO on Facebook riding a surfboard; so is the monk lying in snow forming the shape of an angel. And that's him again dancing Russian-style at a recent wedding. The fact that he's wearing his Cistercian habit in all three images might suggest Fr. Thomas is screaming for attention.

But he has something more profound up his sleeve.

"I simply try," insisted Fr. Thomas, "to be a visible and positive Cistercian presence on the UD campus."

"Fr. Thomas was raised a UD student," smiled Fr. Roch Kereszty, who has taught off and on at the university for over 50 years. "He is known for his shenanigans. He is really a born actor and communicator who loves being with the students."

In the fall of 1963, 30-year-old Fr. Roch Kereszty was serving in his first months as a theology professor at UD, when he was named student chaplain two months in.

"I was an odd phenomenon," he laughed, "speaking broken English with a heavy accent. The students had a difficult time relating to me."

The following fall, he got a lucky break.

With construction beginning on the west wing of the growing Cistercian monastery, Fr. Roch lost his room at the abbey.

"I moved in with the freshman students at Augustine Hall," he recalled.

"Being in the dorm changed everything," said Fr. Roch. "I held conferences once a month. Students came to my room at all hours; they even knocked on my door at 2 am to ask for confession. They were surprised I was asleep!"

"I learned," he said with a smile, "that American college students slept in their classes and stayed up most of the night!"

And about the power of presence.

Like Fr. Thomas and Fr. Roch, all the monks — young and old — do their best to be visible and present.

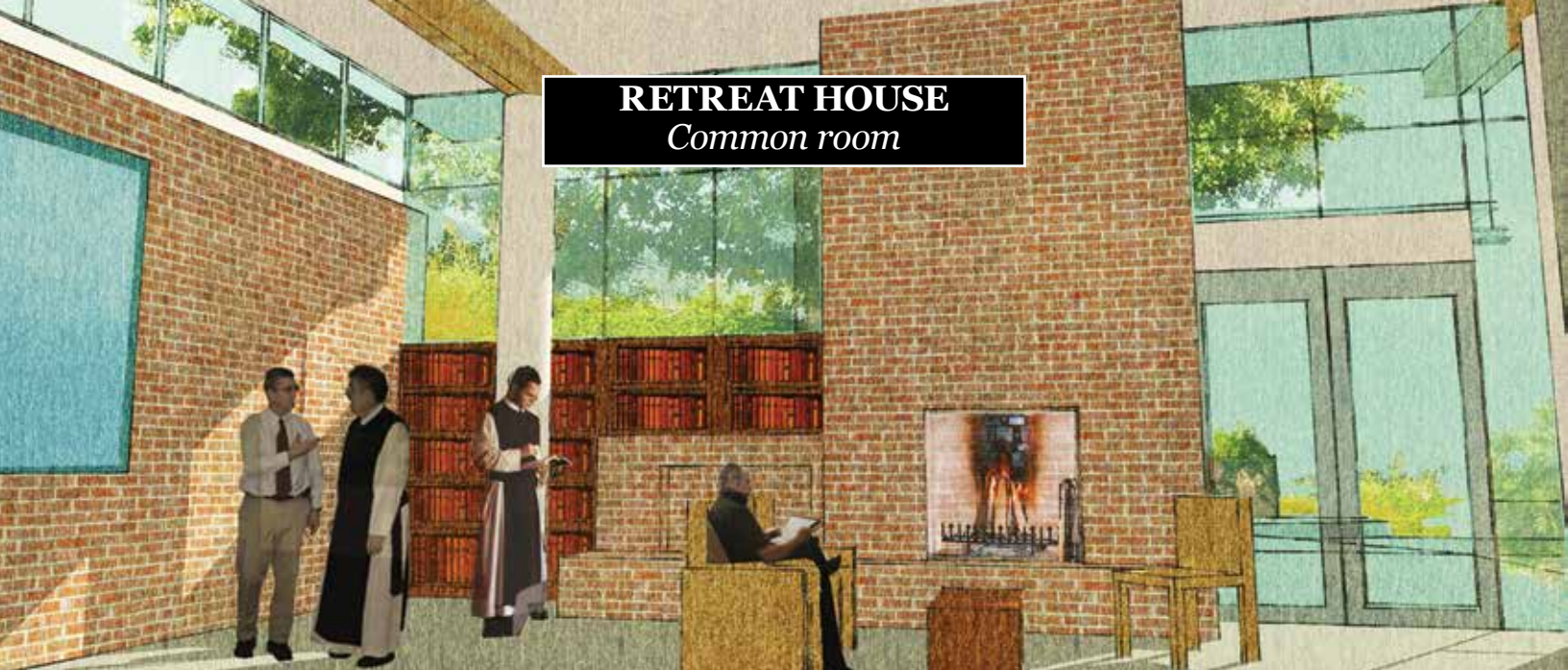
ON SUNDAYS AFTER MASS, the lawn in front of the abbey church swells with people lingering to speak with the monks.

Several years ago, the monks began discussing with architect Gary Cunningham how to facilitate more of those conversations inside the monastery.

"I was slow as usual," admitted architect Gary Cunningham. "I came to the first meetings with the monks thinking we were going to talk about symbolic additions to the monastery like a bell tower or a memorial on top of the hill.

"It took me a few meetings," he said, "to comprehend that the

RETREAT HOUSE *Common room*



monks were far more concerned with practical issues.

“They wanted to improve the experience of the public in the west wing of the abbey — rethinking the parlors, classroom spaces, the retreat center, and confessionals.”

And to improve the efficiency with which the monks might serve them.

When the monastery was constructed in the late fifties and sixties, the Cistercians were, in many ways, lucky just to have a home. Frills were few.

Mass was celebrated for nearly 40 years in a bare-bones room equipped with little more than pews and an altar.

The abbey church, opened in May 1992, began an inexorable transformation.

“Twenty-five years ago,” Cunningham mused, “we were talking about building the church in an attempt to help the abbey survive.

“Now, we’re dealing with success,” he said. “The original facilities were never meant to accommodate the number of visitors coming to the abbey these days.”

“I’m chaplain for Courage DFW,” said Fr. Joseph Van House, “the St. Basil Society (UT-Southwestern students), and a group we’re calling Virtus Fide (a faith-study group for girls at non-Catholic high schools).” That’s in addition to his duties as form master of the Class of 2017, a job that has grown to include occasional faith-related events for parents in the form.

“I have found it difficult to offer hospitality or meeting spaces to these groups at the abbey,” he said. “And for gatherings like these, the prep school isn’t always appropriate.”



Renovations to the retreat house’s common room (top) will create an airy and inviting space to accommodate up to 40. The current wall (below) will be repositioned to incorporate the old patio area, the ceiling will be raised, and a fireplace added.

Individuals aren’t much easier. “Many of us serve as spiritual directors,” explained Fr. Anthony Bigney, “and the current parlor space is limited.”

Individuals seeking spiritual direction or couples preparing for marriage mostly want to meet on weeknights, in the hours after dinner.

While the abbey has many priests to offer spiritual direction, only two “parlors” have been available for this purpose (the third parlor is reserved for confessions).

Neither offers much in the way of creature comforts.

The first sits off the lobby just outside the abbot’s office. Closed-door meetings can be a stuffy affair since the room lacks ventilation.

The second offers more room and more ventilation, but much of its linear shape is wasted since visitors use only less than half of it. (Equipped with a mirror behind its mysterious curtains, the space also serves as the bride’s dressing room.)

If not for the uncomfortable, mid-century office furniture, the two spaces could easily be mistaken for closets.

“It’s amazing,” reflected Fr. Augustine Hoelke ’00, “that people have loved coming to us for all these years in spite of our lack of a proper ‘welcome mat,’ in terms of our front-wing facilities.”

“The new plan,” said Fr. Joseph Van House, “has four functional parlors, each of a different size, all with better shapes than the existing rooms.”

Furnishings also will be improved.

And a dedicated bridal room should help marriages at the abbey start off on a much better foot.

Cunningham’s design team also worked carefully with the monks to adjust the secure line, allowing the abbey to function as a cloistered space while the public visits.

Currently, UD classes taught by Fr. Roch and Abbot-Emeritus Denis Farkasfalvy cause a stir. To reach the abbey’s classrooms,

the students have had to be escorted from the northwest corner of the building through the secured abbey library to reach their destination on the southwest side.

To avoid that interference, the new design expands the building slightly to the southwest and creates a new public area on the first floor, giving students direct access to the abbey classroom.

Natural light (courtesy of new windows) will be introduced to the classroom to encourage students to keep their eyes open.

The small expansion downstairs will make it possible to add a couple of rooms upstairs, bringing the monastery's capacity to a full 40 monks.

The most visible of the changes will take place in and around a little-known building long hidden from sight.

TUCKED IN BEHIND THE ABBEY'S southern carport lies the heart of the monks' plans to reach out in a new way to the community: the retreat house.

The structure's 10 dorm-size bedrooms, kitchen, and small living room were constructed in the sixties as a convent.

“The courtyard area outside the retreat house will make a great place to connect with people.”

— David Hocker,
Hocker Design Group

A handful of Canadian nuns lived there initially, and performed various housekeeping duties in the monastery for over 10 years. For a time, Vietnamese refugees called it home.

Beginning in the nineties, it began to incubate vocations. Fr. Paul McCormick, Fr. Joseph, and Fr. Ignatius Peacher resided there (in exchange for answering the telephone in the abbey) prior to their entering the monastery.

Retreats, of course, also took place there.

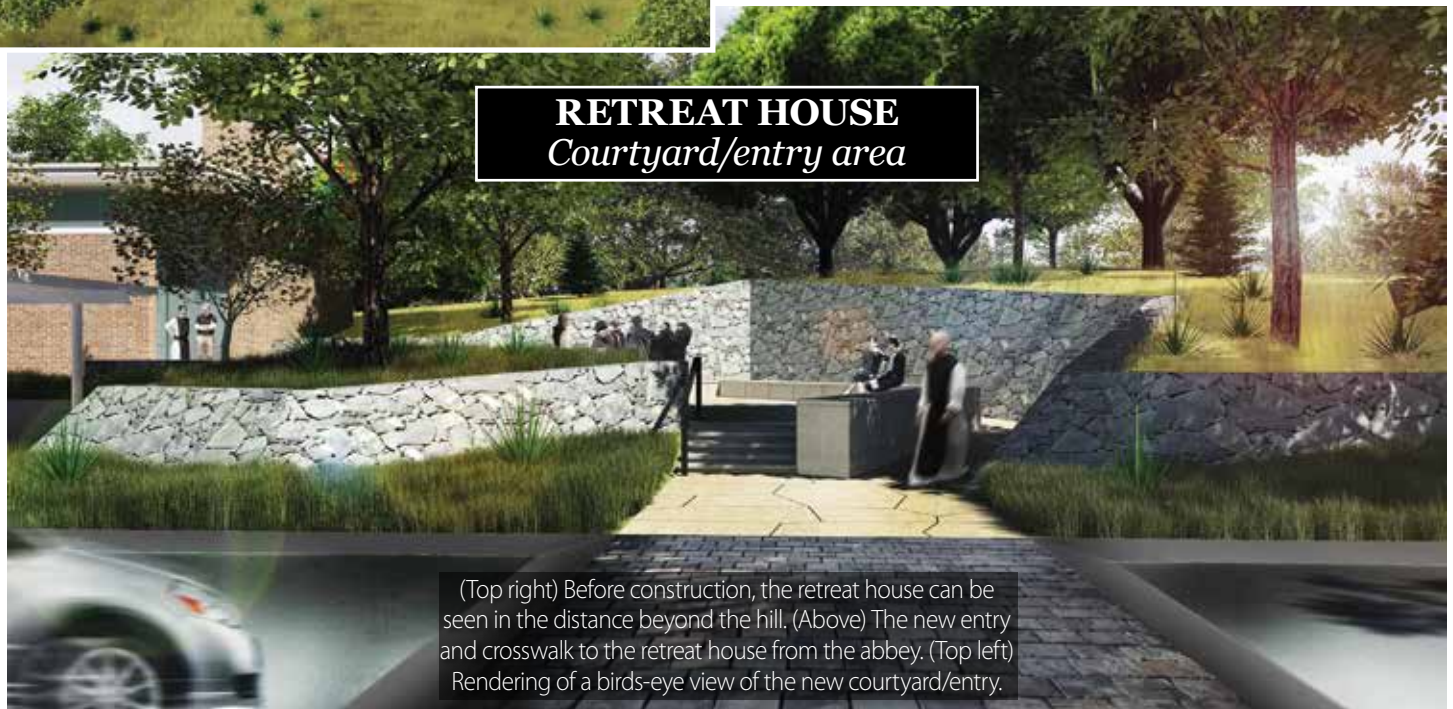
But the “living” or common room accommodated 20 people at best. The entry was concealed behind the carports.

“A year ago,” recalled Fr. Roch, “Fr. Thomas held a discussion group following a First Friday Mass in the monastery classroom.

“There were 40 people crammed into a room that seats 20.”

The construction now underway will remodel the guest rooms and increase the capacity of the common room to 40. A vaulted ceiling with high windows, a fireplace, and an inviting entry/courtyard area will make everyone more comfortable.

David Hocker '96, transformer of so many Cistercian outdoor



(Top right) Before construction, the retreat house can be seen in the distance beyond the hill. (Above) The new entry and crosswalk to the retreat house from the abbey. (Top left) Rendering of a birds-eye view of the new courtyard/entry.

spaces, has planned an exterior courtyard that will allow groups to spill out from the expanded common room, more than doubling its indoor capacity.

The outdoor space also will serve as “an entry sequence (with wheelchair access) to the retreat house from the small southwest vestibule,” said Hocker. A pronounced hump will calm traffic on the driveway that winds around the abbey toward the carpools.

As in many of Hocker’s designs, some seating will be built-in through short walls to create both “a contemplative space and one that can activate interactions.

“The courtyard area outside the retreat house will make a great place to connect with people,” Hocker added.

“I look forward to seeing people happily hosted for talks and retreats in an attractive new space,” said Fr. Augustine.

“The fireplace during the winter will be an especially nice treat!”

“**A**S INFIRMARIAN,” explained Fr. Philip Lastimoso ’00, “I have seen how devastating it is when a monk has to move out of the monastery and into a nursing home. “These monks have such a clear sense of place and firm dedication to the abbey grounds.

“In some real way,” he added, “it is also devastating [in

“[The crypt] is our putting down real and deep roots into the Texas soil. It is here that we live, work, and wait for the end of history.”

— Fr. Roch Kereszty

death] for a monk to be moved out of the monastery and into a cemetery miles away.”

Burying the bodies of monks on the grounds of their abbey has been a tradition at the monasteries of Europe for centuries.

Cunningham, who traveled with Abbot Denis to Europe in 1991 to study abbey church architecture, remembered graves “in the floors, walls, all over the place — inhabiting the churches with their spirits.”

“It will remind us of who we are,” added Fr. John Bayer.

“We cannot forget where we come from,” he added, “especially since God is blessing us today with so much hope for the future.”

The crypt will accommodate 100 bodies, including the 20 that will be moved from Calvary Hill.

Following the funeral Mass, the body of the deceased will be rolled from its place in front of the altar along the transept to the north and through a gate that will mark the entrance to the crypt.

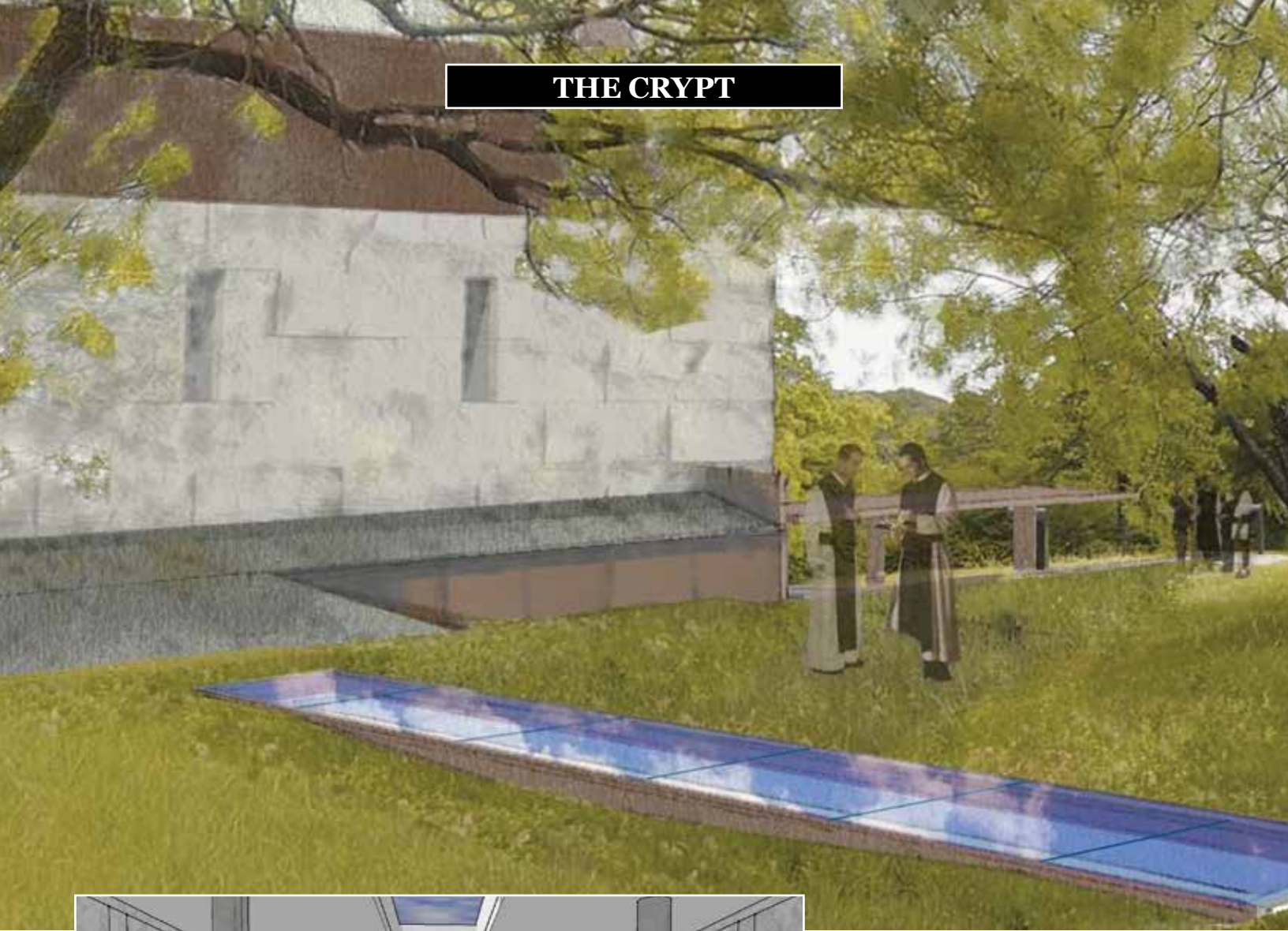
“The space, which is very small, will have a beautiful sense,” Cunningham said, “and feel really good. The crypt faces a space where the monks can gather.”

Two reconciliation rooms will be located on either side of the

On February 9, 2016, the casket containing the body of Fr. Ralph March was wheeled toward a hearse and burial at Calvary Hill Cemetery. It had been Fr. Ralph’s wish that he live long enough to be buried on the grounds of the abbey, in the new crypt.



THE CRYPT



The crypt will be cut into the hill north of the church and aligned with the transept in front of the altar. Caskets will pass through a gated entrance with confessionals on either side, and be rolled down a ramp as monks process down stairs. Sunlight will fill the space through a sliver of windows in the ceiling. An altar will be positioned on the south wall.

entrance, a nod to the practical and the spiritual.

“I am very happy that we will bring home our ancestors,” said Fr. Bernard Marton, “back to our grounds, so they will always be close to us. I cannot wait to visit my brother, Fr. Henry, there on Saturdays.”

“It is our putting down real and deep roots into the Texas soil,”

added Fr. Roch.

“It is here that we live, work, and wait for the end of history.”

“Once you create a burial ground here in the hill,” insisted Cunningham, “the place becomes sacred forever.”

“THE CISTERCIAN MONASTERY offers a calm liturgy,” reflected Fr. Robert Maguire, who first encountered Cistercians as a graduate student at UD in 1967. “The Gregorian chants and the well-chosen classical pieces make it uplifting.”

The new facilities will offer calm places within the monastery — giving more members of the community a chance to interact with the monks individually, and to be uplifted by their presence.

“We have the ability to serve the dioceses more fully,” insisted Fr. Joseph. “The improvements revolve around our offering greater service.”

“Now, if you want to have a Bible study,” Fr. Robert added, “the new design will offer many more options.”

“And people hoping to meet a good priest, dedicated to Christ and to his ministry,” he continued, “will have a place to visit with him. And that priest can make the faith more available to them.”

“This is a good place that’s only getting better.”

February 19, 2016
**The Catholic Foundation
 Award Dinner**



(Clockwise from above) Event co-chair Jim Moroney '74 introduces his form master and the honoree, Abbot-Emeritus Denis Farkasfalvy. (Right) Vicky Lattner, chair, and Matt Kramer, president of The Catholic Foundation, present the award to Abbot Denis. (Below) A strong showing of Hungarians join the honoree at the head table. Sitting, l-r, are Sr. Zita Binder from the Abbey of Kismaros, Miklós Magyar (a high school classmate of the abbot), the honoree, and Fr. Mór Imrefi and Fr. Ipoly Urr, both from the Abbey of Zirc; standing, l-r, are Bishop Kevin Farrell, Marika Farkasfalvy Fáy (the abbot's sister), Abbot Peter Verhalen '73, Miklós Fáy (the abbot's nephew), Abbot Sixtus Dékány of Zirc, and Abbess Olga Horváth of Kismaros. (Left-hand column) The Cistercian community turned out for the event: Middle School parents, students (Class of '17), members of the faculty (and their spouses), monks, and current and alumni parents.



Over 1,700 came to pay tribute to Abbot Denis

See videos on YouTube
@ CatholicFoundationTX



Abbot Denis delivering his remarks at the 34th annual Catholic Foundation dinner in front of a record crowd at the Hilton Anatole.

A night to remember

“If you are a student, alumnus, current parent or parent of an alumnus, current or former faculty member, or a Cistercian monk,” Jim Moroney ’74 said to the record crowd (estimated at over 1,700) gathered at the Hilton Anatole for the 34th Annual Catholic Foundation Dinner in February, “please stand.”

As the Cistercian community lifted themselves up across the large ballroom (some 700 strong), the scale of the support to honor Abbot Emeritus Denis Farkasfalvy stunned most everyone.

It is difficult to remember a larger gathering of the Cistercian community.

All were inspired by a 15-minute video that captured the abbot’s pivotal contributions to the abbey and school.

“While drinking in these accolades



Jere Thompson ’74 and wife Carolyn stand to applaud Abbot Denis.

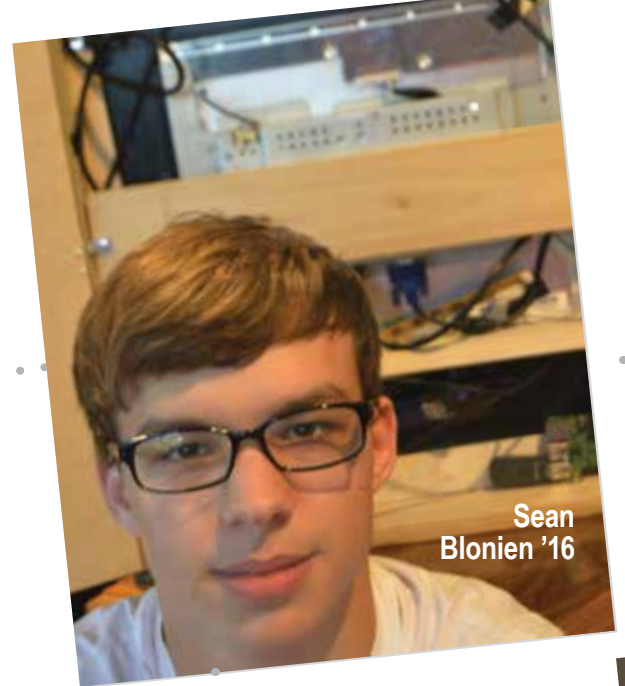
with gratitude,” Abbot Denis explained in his remarks, “I still thirst for acceptance, validation, and feel the desire for excellence.

“Yet, deep down, I know, all that happened was grace.

“All was unmerited grace.”



Adam
Hellinghausen '16



Sean
Blonien '16



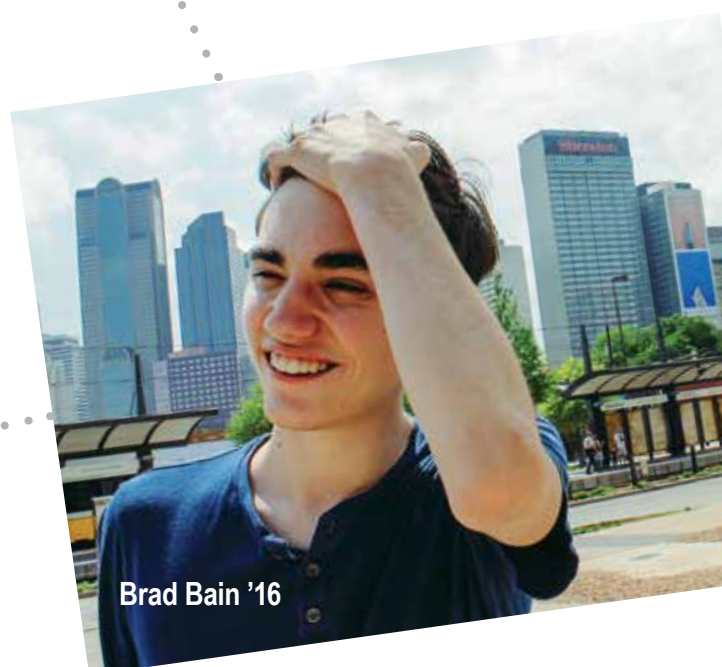
Joseph Nied '16



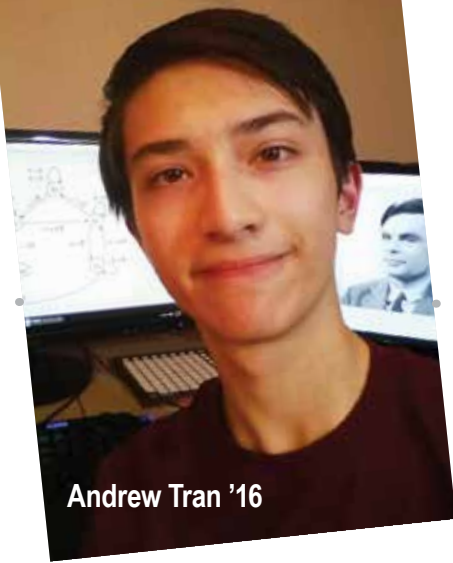
Robert Heemann '16



Corbin
Westkaemper '16

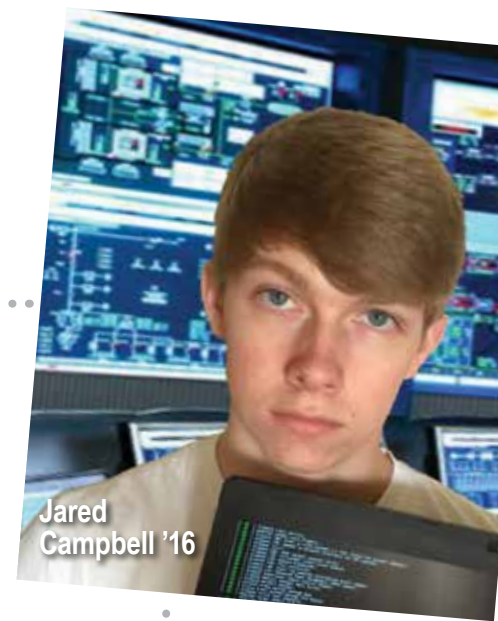


Brad Bain '16



Andrew Tran '16

NEW FACE of TECH



Jared Campbell '16



Mason Arhelger '16



A.J. Anderhub '16

With help from a more supportive curriculum, tech-interested members of the Class of '16 have thrived. By David Exall Stewart

A BUZZ CREPT ITS WAY around one of the freshman classrooms before first period on a spring day in 2013. Members of the Class of '16 weren't talking about a video game, homework assignment, or sporting event. They were sharing thoughts about a tech gadget posted on Facebook the night before by their classmate Brad Bain '16.

The post asked simply, "Is Brad's light on?"

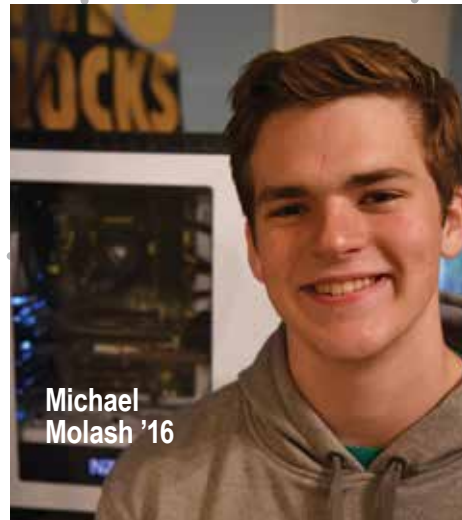
Many of Bain's curious Facebook friends clicked the link to learn the answer.

"He was just playing," remembered Robert Heemann '16, "but it actually worked. He had a Raspberry Pi (a very small, inexpensive computer) programmed to read the signals from a photocell resistor."

Heemann — and his close friends Joseph Nied '16, Andrew Tran '16, and Corbin Westkaemper '16 — appreciated the feat from the angle of Greg Graham's Computer Program Design electives (I and II), which they were taking at the time.

Three other classmates — A.J. Anderhub '16, Jared Campbell '16, and Michael Molash '16 — enjoyed how Bain had improvised an assignment in Fr. Mark's robotics elective (to switch on a light using an Arduino, or micro-controller).

There were others too — including Mason Arhelger '16, Sean Blonien '16, and Adam Hellinghausen '16 — who, having tinkered at home with both hardware and software, marveled at Bain's abilities, and the interest "his light" generated in the Class of 2016.



Michael Molash '16

"IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO DESCRIBE Minecraft to the uninitiated," wrote Alec Radford '11 in a story published in the September 2010 edition of *The Informer*. "The problem is that Minecraft can be pretty much whatever you want it to be."

Released in 2009, the game had gained only a small following of mostly adult gamers by the fall of 2010. Radford was giving Cistercian students a heads-up.

"You find yourself in a randomly generated Lego-esque 3D world," he

explained, “populated by mountains, oceans, rivers, cave systems, trees, plants, animals — you get the idea.

“Your only hope of survival,” he added matter-of-factly, “is to develop tools and build yourself a shelter and weapons to defend yourself.”

Michael Molash '16 was intrigued.

“I went home and spent the whole night creating whatever I could think of,” Molash recalled.

“As fun as playing the game was though,” he emphasized, “what fascinated me most about it was that the entire thing had been coded by one man [a Swede in his mid-twenties named Markus Persson] in his free time after work.

“I decided at that point that I wanted to learn to program so that I could create something amazing.

“After that, I started watching tutorials on YouTube, enrolling in online classes, and reading books. Even the basic projects that the books had you do were incredible to me. I couldn't get enough.”

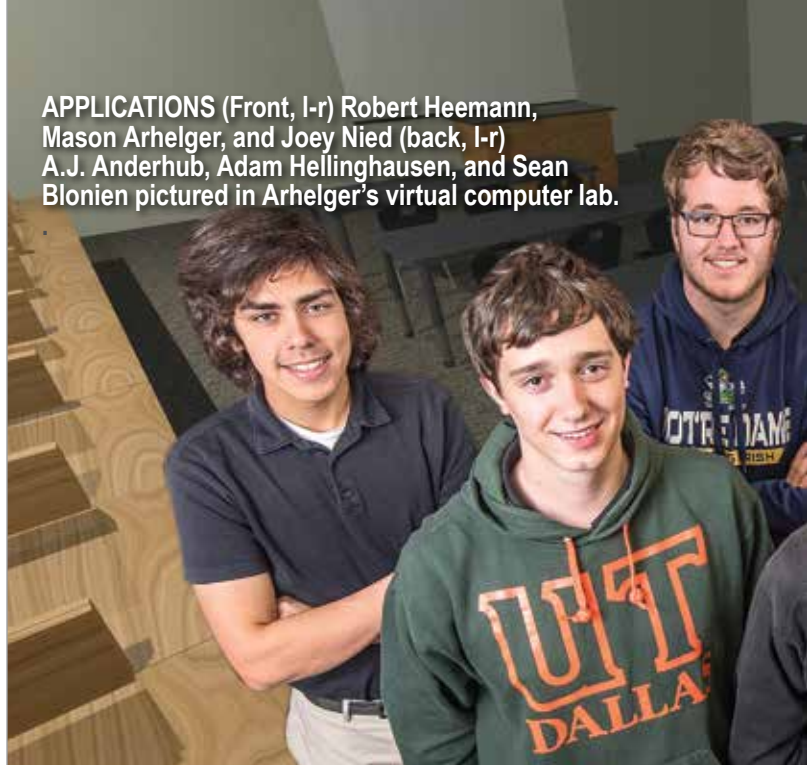
Lots of his classmates were tinkering on their own as well, far from Cistercian's classrooms.

MAGES OF *THE DARK KNIGHT* emanating from his parents' television dared freshman Adam Hellinghausen to test his wits.

“I wanted to know what things in the film were doable,” Hellinghausen said. “By the time I was 16, I had built infrared goggles, a radio headset that could pick up sounds from hundreds of yards away, and even small remote-detonated pyrotechnics.”

He also began crafting masks of his favorite super heroes from cardboard and duct tape. (These put him in great demand by The

APPLICATIONS (Front, l-r) Robert Heemann, Mason Arhelger, and Joey Nied (back, l-r) A.J. Anderhub, Adam Hellinghausen, and Sean Blonien pictured in Arhelger's virtual computer lab.



Black Hand at pep rallies.)

“Most of my pursuits take after my personality,” he added. “I do them because I want to. I teach myself how, and I run with it until I figure out what else to do.”

The visual content of video games inspired Mason Arhelger to explore his technological interests.

“I made a headset with three LEDs on the front that made a triangular shape,” he said. Arhelger then programmed the device to track the movements of his head and transmit them into video game environments.

A.J. Anderhub



HARDWARE

NOTABLE: built computers at home; volunteers at a retirement home to help seniors with their tech devices. Built two quad-copters for senior project.

COLLEGE: computer engineering

“The first iPhone that my dad purchased back in 2007,” said A.J. Anderhub, “really piqued my interest in technology. I was nine-years old.”

Then, during the summer before freshman year, he began building custom computers (“like a lot of my classmates”).

In Form V, Anderhub took both of Fr. Mark's electives, partnering with Jared Campbell to build first a radio (in engineering) and then a plane (in robotics).

But he also serves. “We have an arrangement with a retirement home,” Anderhub explained, “where the seniors can sign up to seek our help with their devices. We've helped quite a number over two years.”

Mason Arhelger



3D MODELING, BUSINESS

NOTABLE: built 3D head-tracking device for use with games; built a 3D model of computer classroom for senior project.

COLLEGE: computer science and business

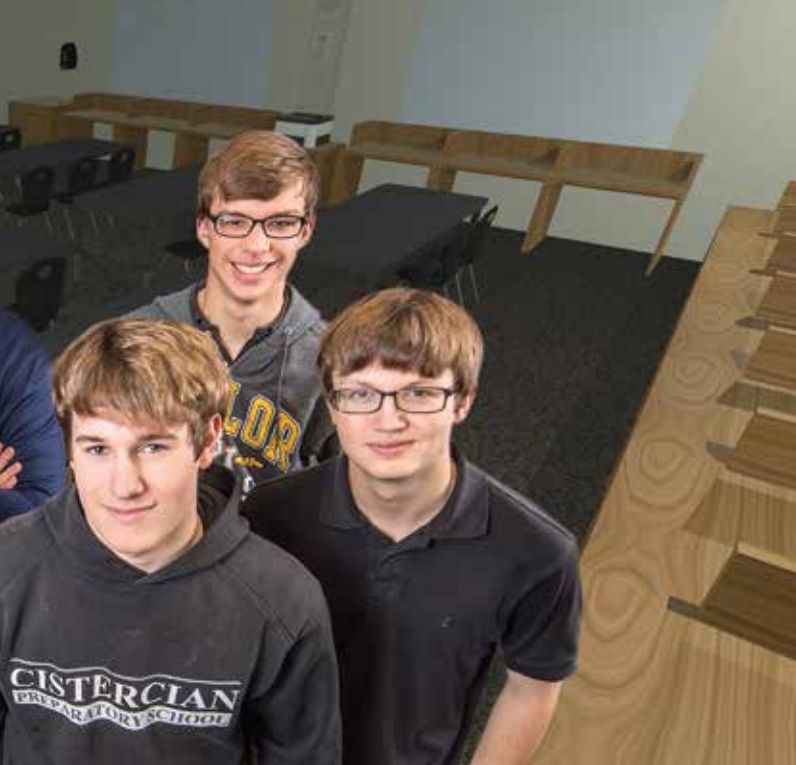
Given a computer around the time he first enrolled at Cistercian, Mason Arhelger first set his sights on building a video game.

“It quickly became apparent,” he said, “that I would have to lower my expectations quite a bit.”

Then as a sophomore, he built a headset with three LEDs to track and translate his head movements into video games.

“Mostly what I try to do now is tackle smaller goals, such as learning how to use 3D modeling software efficiently and figuring out how to work with game engines such as Unity.”

Long-term, Arhelger hopes to be a part of a business where he uses both his technology and business skills.



himself in the programming, design, 3D art, and sound of video games.

Summer camps also played a key role in spurring the technological interests of Jared Campbell.

“My parents and grandparents are all engineers,” said Jared Campbell, “so I’ve been around technology my whole life.”

But two camps at UTD narrowed his focus and steered the Eagle Scout toward the burgeoning field of cyber security.

“ROBERT IS VERY INTERESTED in computer science,” explained Paul Heemann to Greg Graham as his son prepared to enter Upper School in 2012. “Do you think there will be a sufficient number of technology electives at Cistercian to keep him interested?”

Graham provided a comforting, positive answer. But he couldn’t have imagined just how well things would turn out for Heemann’s son and the rest of his classmates.

“The Class of ’16 was the first form with such an intense interest in technology,” Graham recalled, “that we felt it important to offer different electives so that they could take something every semester without repeating one.

“After having a large group in the fall, I taught two advanced classes in spring semesters.” (See the tech electives on p. 20.)

“Several of these guys (Heemann, Nied, and Westkaemper) took my Computer Programming elective first semester freshman year,” smiled Graham, who spent over 20 years in the tech industry (including software development and management) at companies like General Dynamics, Nortel, and Merit Technology, “and every semester after that.

“That was a first.”

His credentials and laid-back temperament appear to have

Long after that device “ended up somewhere in my closet,” Arhelger continued to pursue his interest.

“Mason is the class expert on 3D modeling and virtual reality,” stated Greg Graham, head of the Computer Department.

Pondering video game strategy gave Corbin Westkaemper endless hours of enjoyment.

“I always wanted to get in the head of the developer,” he said, “and think about how I might have done it differently.”

At summer camps over two different summers (at Drexel University and Carnegie-Mellon), he had a chance to immerse

Brad Bain



DEVELOPER/ENTREPRENEUR

NOTABLE: began programming at 8. First app on App Store at 15. Works 10-20 hours/wk at Dialexa (Dallas tech firm).

COLLEGE: electrical eng. or computer science

“Brad now works as our primary contact with a bio-medical client of ours,” explained Greg Corley, vice president of technical operations for Dialexa, a Dallas tech firm that also incubates tech start-ups.

“He writes software that helps their device generate the kind of data that will lead to diagnoses,” he added.

“We tell him that he doesn’t need to go to college. He’s just like any other employee here. Brad has the drive, passion, and skills we look for when we hire someone.”

Bain developed his first app for the App Store, Pasteify, when he was a sophomore. Check his web site bradbain.com for other projects. Senior project: a remote-controlled La-Z-Boy recliner.

Sean Blonien



SOFTWARE , BUSINESS

NOTABLE: built gaming computer, built smart mirror; senior project: financial programming with Quantopian

COLLEGE: computer science and business

“Building my own computer,” said Sean Blonien ‘16, “taught me that technology is something everyone can learn and be a part of.”

“This creation of mine is something that makes my life easier every day,” he added.

Cistercian’s tech electives helped Blonien develop his skills in coding with Python, Java, JavaScript, HTML, and CSS.

His older brothers (Kevin ’11 and Patrick ’14) interested Sean “in the business side of things.”

So for his senior project, he’s created a trading algorithm to recommend securities to purchase based on past performance.

“I love the fact that I set my own parameters,” Blonien said.

meshed well with the tech-centric guys.

In addition to the full complement of electives, a technology club (founded by Nicholas Chee-Awai '13 in 2013) popped up during the freshman year of the Class of '16.

"Since then, I have provided the guys with a space to work on things," Graham said. "They don't need much direction." (This year, sophomores autonomously created a robotic hand.)

"Their interests change so rapidly," he laughed.

The most important curricular development could not have been predicted back when this group entered Upper School.

Instead of just three quarters provided for electives as in the past, the re-imagined senior curriculum implemented this year provided Graham an opportunity to lead a year-long tech seminar.

Over a third of the class signed up (making it the largest senior seminar by far).

Graham's technological and theological background (he earned a master's in theology at UD) gave him a chance to put technology in perspective. He used the first semester to spark discussions on difficult subjects like artificial intelligence.

Meanwhile, many of his students began working on their senior projects early (i.e., in the fall).

FIFTEEN MEMBERS OF THE TECHNOLOGY Senior Seminar crowded around a single computer monitor in March to watch Joseph Nied demonstrate the status of his senior project, an iPhone 6 game with the working title, "Falldown."

Nied conceived, created, and programmed the game, designing the visuals as well as composing and producing the music, the latter being a component that came easily to him.

Using his Novation synthesizer at home, he had been creating music for years, much of the time without an instrument. He simply selects the notes, the velocity, tempo, sustain, etc.

He founded the electronic music club this year and plans to study audio recording and mixing in preparation for a career in designing sound for games and movies.

"Can the bird jump?" asked Heemann of the protagonist, nicknamed "Tiny," who seeks (with the help of the game player) to descend from the heavens by stepping from platform to platform. The feat is complicated by the game's antagonist, a flying fish, that randomly streaks across the screen diagonally. Tiny could more easily avoid collisions (and certain death), Heemann was suggesting, by jumping.

"I might make it jump," Nied ruminated, "although

'16 tech electives

Form V

Computer Program Design I • CP Design II, or Engineering • Robotics (Fr. Mark Ripperger)

Form VI

Web Programming • Advanced JavaScript

Form VII

Android Programming • Graphics Programming

Form VIII

Technology Senior Seminar (or other)

Classes taught by Greg Graham except as marked.

Jared Campbell



CYBER SECURITY

NOTABLE: Eagle Scout; interest in robotics switched when he attended a series of intensive UTD summer camps on cyber security

COLLEGE: electrical engineering and computer science

"The main reason for my interest in technology," said Jared Campbell '16, "is my family. My parents and grandparents are all engineers, so I've been around technology my whole life."

Dad Jeff Campbell, the former director of research at UTD, has played an important role throughout.

Last summer, he made his son aware of a "camp" (8 hours/day for four weeks) at UTD on cyber security. Campbell was invited back for two more weeks of intensive study.

The elder Campbell also played a key role in arranging for the use of a 3D printer to manufacture parts for Campbell's senior project: building two quad-copters with A.J. Anderhub.

Robert Heemann



BIG PICTURE, BUSINESS

NOTABLE: Eagle Scout; well versed in programming, his interest gradually shifted toward hardware

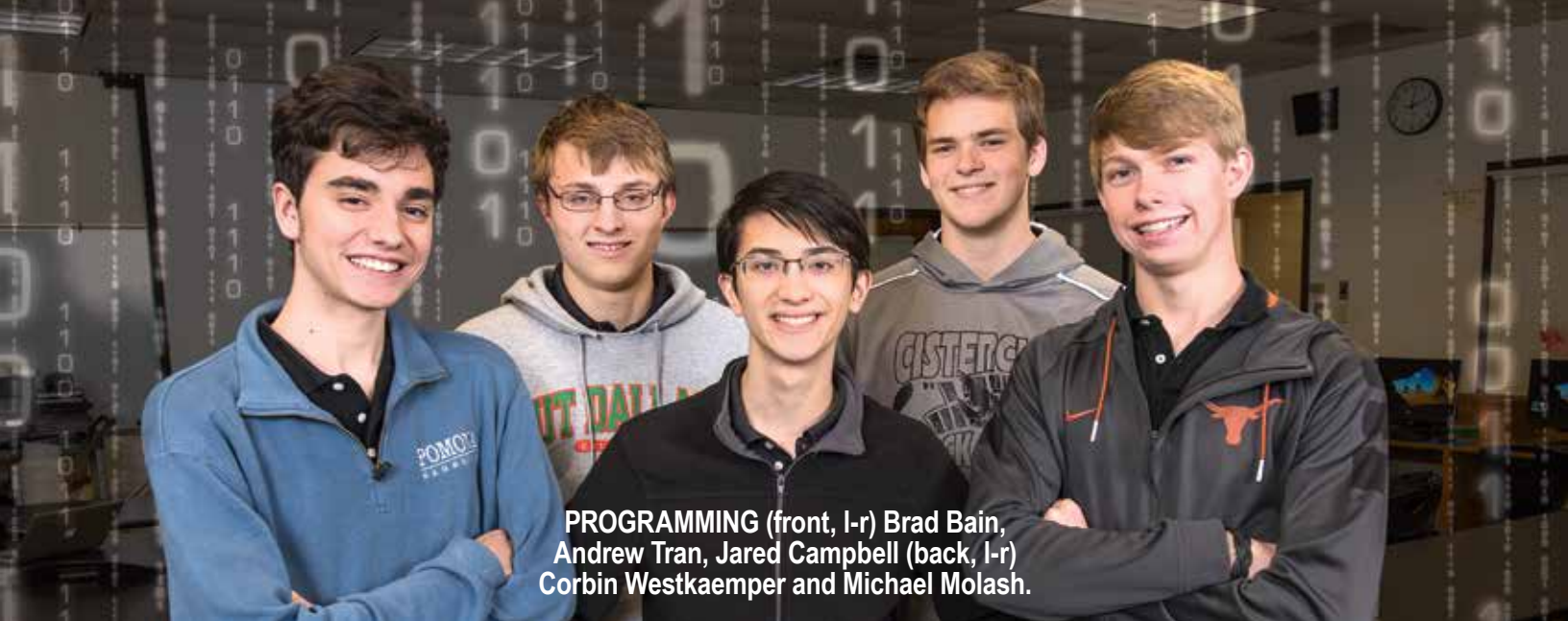
COLLEGE: electrical eng. or computer science

"I have always been intrigued by that huge silver and black box under the desk that let me do such wonderful things," said Heemann.

"But all of my electives at Cistercian were based around learning code and how programs worked," he added.

"Then at some point, I moved into an area that involved both software and hardware ('that mess of cables and ports inside the computer')."

Working on his senior project with friend Corbin Westkaemper, Heemann researched the feasibility of manufacturing an open-architecture PC to play Xbox games just like a console.



PROGRAMMING (front, l-r) Brad Bain, Andrew Tran, Jared Campbell (back, l-r) Corbin Westkaemper and Michael Molash.

given the user interface, it might appear weird.”

After the scrum (as this daily review of the seniors’ projects is known), Westkaemper scooted his chair next to Nied to offer his take on Heemann’s suggestion and try out some code.

“**I FEEL IT TODAY,**” said Jared Campbell as he set the quad-copter down on the Upper Field on a sunny spring morning. Partner A.J. Anderhub, a select soccer player for most of his high school years, set up his camera to capture the lift-off.

About 20 yards away, eight classmates from the Technology Senior Seminar enjoyed the sunshine and waited, hoping to erupt should the contraption rise into the blue.

“When A.J. and Jared presented the plan for their senior project,”

said Greg Graham, the faculty member leading the Technology Senior Seminar, “I felt it was too advanced, just too much to complete by the end of the year.”

But by March, they were among the first members in the seminar prepared to test theirs out.

“We’ve created two remote-controlled quad-copters,” said Anderhub, who built his first computer freshman year and hopes someday to design hardware for a company like Apple, Nvidia, or Intel. “We assembled them into a 3D-printed chassis, one of which we designed on our own.”

(Some pieces of the drones were printed on Cistercian’s 3D printer; others required a larger printer.)

“We hope at least one of them is capable of acceptable aerial photography or self-automation.”

Adam Hellinghausen



DESIGN, JET PROPULSION

NOTABLE: by 16 had built infrared goggles and a radio headset to pick up sounds at a distance of 100 yards. Likes to craft super hero masks.

COLLEGE: aerospace engineering

“I always wanted to know how things worked, and I loved watching television.

“I wondered how they could manage to get light and colors onto a screen in such a small space,” he added, “and after lots of googling, I was hooked on knowing more.”

That same television set brought home a feast of visual delights, like *The Dark Knight*.

He began shaping cardboard, foam, and duct tape into masks and chest armor, creating uncanny replicas.

But Hellinghausen also has his eyes set on advancing the concept of electro-magnetic pulse-driven engines, and would love to work at NASA to help build a craft that travels to Mars.

Michael Molash



PROGRAMMING, ENGINEERING

NOTABLE: excelled as a summer intern at PVP Live where he wrote algorithms to sort data for patterns.

COLLEGE: software development/engineering

An article in *The Informer* on the video game Minecraft intrigued Molash in Form III.

“But what fascinated me most,” he remembered, “was that the entire thing had been coded by one man in his free time after work. I couldn’t believe what somebody was able to create all on their own, and I decided at that point that I wanted to learn to program so that I could create something amazing.”

Over the summer prior to senior year, Molash worked 10 hours a week at PVP Live, the face of esports and competitive gaming.

“We expected Michael to complete one or two projects over the summer,” said Jesse Maegan, PVP’s director of development. “He completed one or two projects every week.”

On this day, a motor malfunctioned on the model held together by glue and duct tape; the group turned and strode back toward the computer lab.

“We are still fixing issues,” acknowledged Campbell, who has worked with Anderhub on a variety of projects, ranging from a radio and plane (in Fr. Mark Ripperger’s engineering and robotics electives) to a clock for a project in their senior physics class.

“They don’t get discouraged,” said Graham of the drone-building duo.

“They just keep plugging.”

“WE SAW AN OPPORTUNITY to give video game players a personal computer with the best of everything at a reasonable price,” said Robert Heemann of the senior project he undertook with longtime friend Corbin Westkaemper way back in October.

For years, video game players had a choice between two platforms: personal computers or consoles (Xbox or Playstation). The PCs offered higher performance and were easier to upgrade, but not all games could be played on them. Consoles were expensive and difficult to upgrade.

“We decided to build an open-architecture PC running the Steam OS,” he said, “that would combine the best features of the PC and

Senior projects

Anderhub
Arhelger

Bain

Blonien

Campbell

Heemann

Hellinghausen

Molash

Nied

Tran

Westkaemper

Quad-copter (w/Campbell)

3D virtual reality of computer lab

Remote-controlled recliner

Securities-trading algorithm

Quad-copter (w/Anderhub)

Gaming PC (w/Westkaemper)

Inter-active art installations

Go-cart (with Jack O’Toole)

Video game for iPhone 6

Paper on computational theory

Gaming PC (w/Heemann)

the consoles and would be significantly less expensive than consoles using Steam OS.

“And they would be easy to upgrade.”

They grappled with design and manufacturing issues of the case (Cistercian’s 3D printer could not print on a large enough surface) and planned to open a Kickstarter page.

“They were so into this project,” marveled Graham, “they were working on it for hours during the first semester. Heemann was the visionary and Westkaemper the practical one.”

“We had our goals set,”

Heemann said. “If we raised a minimal amount, we’d build them by hand using a 3D printer. If we raised more, we’d buy a 3D printer.”

Then reality hit. Out of the blue, Microsoft made a series of announcements that culminated in March with the news that PC and Xbox gaming platforms would be unified into a single ecosystem running Universal Windows Applications.

With gamers soon able to play Xbox games on any Windows 10 device, the market niche identified by Heemann and Westkaemper vanished.

“We experienced during the course of our senior seminar,” Heemann suggested, “just how fast opportunities in the technology arena can change.”

Joseph Nied



SOUND DESIGN, SYNTHESIS

NOTABLE: taught himself synthesis, mixing, and music. Founded computer music and sound design club.

COLLEGE: audio recording and mixing

Greg Graham introduced Nied to programming during a summer school course between Middle and Upper School.

Sophomore year, he learned Racket, Java, JavaScript, and C#.

This knowledge helped as Nied explored his love of music, sound design, and music recording.

At home he was delving into sound through a synthesizer by Novation and FL Studio, a digital audio workstation that can generate musical sounds and fashion entire pieces of music.

At school, he put his expertise to work as the “sound man” behind the curtain at productions like Coffee House and founded the Electronic Music Club.

Andrew Tran



MATH, FINANCE

NOTABLE: top “math guy” with programming skills. Combining the two in his senior project on computational theory.

COLLEGE: applied math or computer science

As the top “math guy” in the Class of ‘16, Tran sometimes escapes notice in the tech sphere.

“Outside of school,” said Tran, “I’ve built computers with my friends, taken online courses, and found various online resources related to computer programming.”

He studied for and took the AP Computer Science test, built mobile applications and websites, and volunteered at a local library to help middle school students explore computer science and computer programming.

He took the Math Senior Seminar but blended math and technology in his senior project by writing a summary of the theory of computation, the mathematical foundation of computers.

“The biggest resource Cistercian provided to enhance my development,” reflected Mason Arhelger, “is my classmates.”

The breadth of their senior projects (see box) suggests the richness of those resources. While technology unites them on some levels, it also catapulted them into many different directions.

Arhelger’s interest in technology led him into 3D modeling, showcased by the highly realistic portrayal of the computer classroom he created for his senior project.

“When I took my first look through the goggles [featuring a Samsung phone] in March,” Graham insisted, “for a second, I thought I was seeing through glasses. The scale and proportion were very accurate. Since then, Mason has spent countless hours fine-tuning the details to get the room just right.”

“Minecraft got me interested in technology,” acknowledged Sean Blonien, who first encountered the game at Arhelger’s house back in 2010 when they were in Form III.

“It is one of the reasons I built my own computer.” Blonien earned the money to buy the parts by sacking groceries at Kroger.

His affinity for video games began to fade as he rose through Upper School, and his interest grew in making the most of his earnings. For his senior project, Blonien created a trading algorithm to make buy/sell recommendations by calculating the moving five-day averages of securities (or other metrics).

Andrew Tran, the class “math guy,” managed to carve out a tech-related project in the Math Senior Seminar.

“Andrew prepared a paper on theoretical computer science,” said Richard Newcomb, head of the Math Department, “that explores abstract logic and Turing machines, the foundations on which computers are based. His work equates to a course in theoretical computer science at the undergraduate level.”

Corbin Westkaemper



VIDEO GAME DEVELOPMENT

NOTABLE: a series of summer programs (including one at Carnegie Mellon) heightened his interest and skills in game development.

COLLEGE: software engineering

Westkaemper’s fascination with video games wasn’t just in the playing.

“I like to try to get in the head of game developers,” Westkaemper explained, “wondering what I would do.”

At 14, he attended a three-week computer science summer camp at Drexel University. At 15, he was accepted to a five-week program at Carnegie Mellon devoted to game development.

“Developers,” Westkaemper said, “immersed us in the programming, design, 3D art, and sound of video games.”

“I like to think that I have a combination of creative and programming skills,” he said, “that will allow me to cobble together mock-ups that others can streamline.”

A FEW SENIOR PROJECTS FELL outside their proponent’s intended field of study.

Hellinghausen, whose interests stretch from movies to technology, chose a senior project in the Art Senior Seminar that explored racial prejudices through art installations.

Working with his friend Max Talkington ’16, they created works and prompted the “public” to respond.

“Our project is fairly low-tech,” acknowledged Hellinghausen, who plans a career in aerospace engineering. He’s particularly interested in exploring new forms of propulsion (e.g., electro-magnetic pulse driven engines) that might power rockets at NASA.

Then there’s Brad Bain’s motorized recliner and Michael Molash’s go-cart, which he built with friend Jack O’Toole ’16. They just wanted to have some fun.

After all, Bain and Molash had little left to prove to Graham, their classmates, even their employers.

Last summer, Molash worked 10 hours a week for PVP Live (a Frisco-based provider of news, scores, highlights, and analysis of esports and competitive gaming).

“I wrote algorithms,” Molash explained, “to collect and find patterns in data (also called data science) from pro matches or video games to generate content that could be presented on the PVP Live web site or show.”

“Michael blew us away,” said Jesse Maegan, director of operations for PVP Live.

“We expected him to complete one or two projects over the course of the summer,” Maegan said. “Michael [who turned 17 last June] completed one or two per week.”

Bain’s work history extends back to the summer after his sophomore year when he started interning at Dialexa (a Dallas tech start-up). Last summer, he became the first high school intern at Sabre (a worldwide tech company based in Southlake). Then it was back to Dialexa in the fall, where he worked after school.

“Brad has been working here 10-20 hours a week,” said Greg Corley, vice president of technical operations at Dialexa, “to write software for one of our bio-medical clients.

“He works side by side with our seasoned developers,” he said. “We forget he’s in high school.

“Brad has the drive, passion, and skills we look for. We’d hire him right now if we had the chance.”

The same could be said for most of his classmates.

MEMBERS OF THE CLASS OF ’16 found various “ins” to technology.

From *The Dark Knight* to Minecraft, the possibilities dared them to explore — free from helicopter parents and well-meaning teachers. In these “worlds,” they tested their courage, ingenuity, logic, and even social skills.

These seniors represent the leading edge of what a story in *The New York Times* recently called, “The Minecraft Generation.”

What’s different about them?

They find their own way, through games, software, hardware, and languages. They rely on their own resources to program, to persevere, and to communicate with one another.

They regard technology *not* as an end in itself, but as a sandbox, a playground where they can learn as easily about computer science as they can learn about themselves.

And how they might change the world.

Their light? It is definitely on.

Frightening non-fiction: Attack of the iThings

Last year I learned technology is a lot like the cute blonde who walked into my office one summer day, packing a sob story the way a gangster packs a gun. Like a '69 Camaro she was all dangerous curves and built for speed — seductive, and nothing but trouble.



Afterthoughts
Smokey Briggs '84

Technology is like that — seductive, but trouble in the end.

Man's ability to create tools lifted our species from grubbing under rocks to installing heart valves.

It has been a wonderful trip, but the destination is mindless oblivion.

I've seen it.

It all started when I tore my biceps loose.

I had the malfunctioning muscle reattached in Austin.

Before my first trip, I called a motel rumored to be near the doctor's office.

A young lady answered. I told her I needed a reservation.

"OK," she answered. "Our website is www.blah.blah.blah."

"I would like to make the reservation now, on the telephone," I told her.

"Oh, I guess I can do that," she said.

With my confirmation written down I said, "Ma'am, I will be driving in from west Texas on US 290. US 290 intersects Route 1. How do I get from Route 1 to your hotel?"

I was greeted with a long silence, and then, "Sir, our address is 9000 East Blah Blah."

"Ma'am, I have your address, I want to know how to get there."

"Well, just type it into your iPhone," she said perkily.

"I do not have an iPhone," I said.

"Oh," she said. "Well, whatever phone you use."

"Ma'am, the telephone I use is marvelous. It fits in my shirt pocket, and will connect me to people all over the world. But it does not give directions. That is why I asked you," I said.

"Oh," she said, as though I had told her I had a rare, but communicable, disease. More silence, and then, "How do you know where you are going if you do not have a phone?"

It took me a moment to comprehend her question.

Finally I said, "Usually I ask directions, if I do not have a map. Just tell me the names of the big streets nearby, and I'll wing it."

More silence. "Sir, I don't think I can help you. Maybe you can look it up on your computer." My phone went silent.

I was left to surmise that this person does not know where she works. Does she know where she lives? Does an iThing tell her how to get to work, and back again? What else does it tell her how to do?

I can hear the computerized voice commanding, "Breathe in, breathe out."

How can human beings tolerate not knowing where they are? I know we quit teaching geography, but did we also quit teaching self-awareness?

Remember the science fiction definition of a sentient creature — "a creature that is self-aware, and realizes it is self-aware"? Self-awareness requires a general knowledge of your whereabouts in the space-time continuum.

I am not sure Ms. iClerk qualifies.

I poked around on the Internet, found a map, printed pieces of it on typing paper, and stumbled my way to the hotel.

Once I asked a bum for directions. Three-fifths into a plastic bottle of liquid brain killer he was more help than iClerk at the hotel. I met an old friend for supper. He is a fireman.

Firemen generally know their way around town.

After supper I said, "I need a map of this burg. Let's hunt one up." So we did.

The conversation with the 20-something iClerk at the drugstore was similar to my conversation with the hotel iClerk.

"A what?"

"A map."

"Like on your phone?"

"No, like printed on paper."

"Ohhhh. I don't think we have anything like that," he said as though I had asked for a Paratronics Mass Conversion Regulator to repair my flying saucer.

Our search ended at a dusty rack in an older grocery store.

"I thought we still had a few of these. We were thinking of throwing them out. Nobody uses them any more," the night manager said with a smile as he tapped the iPhone peeking out of his shirt pocket.

I smiled weakly back, and spied one titled, "City of Austin." There were two. I bought them both, feeling like a miser who stubbed his toe on a silver dollar.

"What am I going to do?" I asked my friend as we left, me clutching my precious pieces of dusty, printed paper. "If they stop selling maps, eventually, there will not be any. Eventually, I'll wear these out. Then what?"

Then it hit me. Everywhere, everyone was either staring at an iPhone, or had one stuck to their ear.

It was creepy, like striking a match in a cave to find the floor covered with spiders.

The hair on the back of my neck was on end. The implications of a mapless world staffed by iClerks and other assorted iPeople connected to time, space and each other solely by electronic surrogates crushed into my cerebelic regions.

"I guess you will have to buy an iPhone," my friend chuckled.

"No. I am not joining the ranks of these, these ... iZombies! I refuse to exist on this spinning rock with my only reference to spatial reality being whatever a computerized widget tells me. A human being should *know* where he is. He should not ask have to ask "Sherry."

"It's Siri," my friend said peevishly.

"That's what I said."

"Not really." Then he unpocketed an iPhone and said, "Hey Siri, where am I and where is my truck?"

Holding his phone to his ear he stepped off the curb. "Siri says to go this way." Horrified, I realized it was too late for my friend.

Then he proffered me the iPhone. "Siri would like to talk to you," he said.

Curious and horrified, I took the thing.

"Hi Smokey," the voice said. It was the voice of cute blonde, the '69 Camaro that was all curves and trouble. "You should buy an iPhone. We'll have a lot of fun. I can make everything easy. You won't have to think about a thing — not where you are, or when to turn left, or what to eat, or adding up two-plus-two — I'll do it all. You can just sit back and relax..."

I jerked the thing away from ear, heart pounding, blood cold. And I ran.

JUNE

**4-5 Alumni Reunions
Weekend**

**6 Summer Programs
run through July 1**

AUGUST

22 Opening Ceremonies

Mother Earth and the fate of Antaeus in our time

Many people feel as though the rhythm of our life is accelerating exponentially and the pressures of daily life are increasing far too fast, and that as a consequence our ability to be at peace, to rest, to think, to focus is diminishing. Our prayer life is reduced to a rattling of some vocal prayers and short sighs to God during the day, or only when we go to sleep. Our old vices are less resistible than ever, to the point that we are tempted to give up fighting them.



On Prayer
Fr. Roch Kereszty

The usual recommendations in a situation like this are, of course, obvious: slow down, carve out half an hour to read the Bible, and ask God to speak to you and help you. But what if this does not work? God remains silent, the person agitated and helpless against the threatening confusion of daily living. The spirit

would be ready, but the flesh is weak. And the supernatural energies of grace need a more or less healthy body as a “base of operation.” At times, grace restores the health of the body, but God will not do for us what we can do for ourselves.

Some of you might remember the myth of Antaeus. His mother was Gaia, the earth, and he was invincible as long as his feet touched the ground; from the earth, divine energies filled him. One of the tasks Hercules had to accomplish was the defeat of Antaeus. He knew his secret, so he lifted Antaeus up and crushed him. Western man today is an Antaeus, lifted up from the ground and therefore unable to defend himself against the destructive forces of technology and “civilization.” He has lost touch with Mother Earth, lives now in a jungle of concrete and glass, pampers and at the same time ruins his body, unaware that his body could be a good friend and cooperator in his endeavors. He does not know how to win it over. A body that is ignored or mistreated will take revenge sooner or later: one day the lower instincts will pierce through the thin veneer of rationality and erupt with a vengeance in outbursts of rage, lust and hatred.

Yet healing is so easy to obtain. Leave the world of concrete and virtual reality for a while, find a park, a forest, a mountain. It is easier to make peace with your body in nature than in virtual reality. Through your body you are in touch with the earth from where you were taken and to which you will return. Be present in your senses. Watch the sky, stroke and feel the grass and the flowers, drink in the

life and beauty surrounding you. Stop and see and admire. God has created the world in all its inexhaustible beauty for you to enjoy. It is His personal gift to you, renewed every day.

A young man, who becomes Father Zossima in Dostoyevsky’s “The Brothers Karamazov,” saw this overflowing joy and thankfulness in his brother who was dying from tuberculosis:

“Well, doctor, have I another day in this world?” he would ask, joking.

“You’ll live many days yet,” the doctor would answer, “and months and years too.”

“Months and years!” he would exclaim. “Why reckon the days? One day is enough for a man to know all happiness. My dear ones, why do we quarrel, try to outshine each other and keep grudges against each other? Let’s go straight into the garden, walk and play there, love, appreciate, and kiss each other, and glorify life” [...]

The windows of his room looked into a garden, and our garden was a shady one, with old trees in it which were coming into bud. The first birds of spring were flitting in the branches, chirruping and singing at the windows. And looking at them and admiring them, he began suddenly begging their forgiveness too: “Birds of heaven, happy birds, forgive me, for I have sinned against you too.”

None of us could understand that at the time, but he shed tears of joy.

“Yes”, he said, “there was such glory of God all about me: birds, trees, meadows, sky: only I lived in shame and dishonored it all and did not notice the beauty and glory.”

If we do not have time to hike in nature, let us work in the garden. Weeding, digging, planting make us feel connected to the earth. We find the phrase “Mother Earth” in every archaic culture because it expresses a real tie between us and the earth. She is not a goddess, but our bodies were formed from her, and will again become part of her at death.

If we are strangers to her, we are strangers to ourselves. Reconnected, we will open up powerful channels of energy for love, work and prayer. We will even become more open to the energizing presence of the Holy Spirit.