

THE GAEL

A Newsletter for St. Mary's/Kennedy Catholic Alumni

Vol. 3/Fall 2005



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Coming Full Circle

Kennedy Catholic welcomes back former students

Perhaps the greatest testament to a college preparatory school is not how many students are accepted into institutions of higher learning, but how many come back to the place that got them there.

When the new academic year began at Kennedy Catholic on Sept. 6, there were 15 new faces in the building. Three of those – Gina DiSenso, Joanne Higgins and Dana Morando – are returning to help the next generation of graduates succeed.



Gina DiSenso

A 1999 graduate of Kennedy Catholic, Ms. DiSenso joins the English Department to teach English 10, English 10 Honors and English 11. The school was the impetus of many things for Ms. DiSenso, who decided she wanted to be an English major following her senior year AP English class. She would go on to earn a bachelor's in English

and a master's in Communication Arts from Iona College. Kennedy Catholic is also where she first became involved in theater, an industry she has worked in for more than 10 years.

"It's a really good feeling to come back to my roots," Ms. DiSenso said. "It (Kennedy Catholic) has had such a tremendous impact on who I am."

After graduating from Kennedy Catholic in 1996, Ms. Higgins went to earn her bachelor's in psychology from Ithaca College and master's in counseling from Pace University. She rejoined her alma mater two years ago, returning as a counselor with the Archdiocese Drug Abuse Prevention Program (ADAPP). Ms. Higgins currently spends two days a week at Good Counsel in White Plains, one day at St. John and Paul in Larchmont and Wednesdays at Kennedy Catholic.

"I was excited," Ms. Higgins said of returning to her old high school. "Everybody there was so welcoming; they made the transition very easy for me."

As Kennedy Catholic's ADAPP counselor, Ms. Higgins provides extra support, counseling and education to students that goes beyond the academic arena. Using individual and group counseling models, she helps students with stress management, study skills and responsible decision-making. She also runs faculty and parent workshops on topics of concern within the school.

"There's a lot involved with it," Ms. Higgins said, includ-

ing crisis intervention.

From the Class of '98, Ms. Morando returns to her alma mater as a sophomore guidance counselor. She does so with a bachelor's in Psychology from Marist College, along with her master's in Counseling and certification in K-12 School Counseling from Mercy College.



Dana Morando

"I think it gave me a really good foundation," Ms. Morando said of her time spent at Kennedy Catholic, "and I made a lot of great friends here."

During her four-year stay, Ms. Morando managed the women's soccer team, participated in campus ministry, Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD), Yearbook and went on Emmaus – "That was one of the best experiences."

Now that she's back, Ms. Morando will be coordinating SADD and putting together a Career Day tentatively scheduled for April. Before returning to Kennedy Catholic, Ms. Morando was an English Language Arts teacher at Assumption School in Peekskill, N.Y.

The Kennedy Catholic community welcomes all three ladies back, and thanks them for choosing to give back to the school that helped lay their educational and spiritual foundations.

TOGETHER IN FAITH

On the first Friday of each month, the entire Kennedy Catholic community gathers in the auditorium to celebrate the Eucharist as a single school. As cherished alumni, you are always in our thoughts and prayers, but we'd much rather have you there with us. Please consider joining us for the following community Masses:

- December 8
- January 6
- February 3
- March 1 (Ash Wednesday)
- April 7

All Masses begin at 8:30 a.m.



Sisters Barbara Heil, Christopher O'Toole and Janet Meehan with the new sign for The Meadow, dedicated to their order on Sept. 7.

Meadow

DEDICATED TO THE SISTERS

Do you remember the Meadow? Long before Kennedy Catholic hurlers stared down opposing batters or Gaels field hockey teams went stick-to-stick, their trim field was wild with flora and fauna. Depending on the year you graduated, it might have been lined with dogwood with a road meandering past the White House paved with beautiful blue stone. Later, back in 1993, it became a baseball field, christened by 2-1 victory over Yorktown.

"The lake was beautiful," said former Principal Sister Christopher O'Toole reminiscing about the dock and canoe that once had been. "We could swim in it then."

At a ceremony on September 7, the Meadow was formally dedicated to the Sisters of the Divine Compassion, the founding order of teachers and administrators since Kennedy's inception as St. Mary's High School of Katonah in 1924.

With the Class of 2006 in attendance, President Rev. Stephen Norton and Chaplain Rev. James Teague dedicated "The Meadow" to the Sisters.

"I never want Kennedy Catholic's history to be lost or forgotten," Father Norton said. "The Sisters of the Divine Compassion are integral to that history."

Going forward, Father Norton hopes to continue to expand the school's athletic facilities. He envisions dugouts for the baseball field, and perhaps an expansion of The Meadow itself so that Kennedy Catholic can play host to sectional tournaments. Perhaps even an alumni baseball tournament in the future?

Beyond Kennedy

With their years at Kennedy Catholic High School behind them, many members of the Class of 2002 have moved beyond the borders of their native Westchester County to further their education. Over the past three years, some 23 students have left the United States entirely, trav-



eling to more than 15 different countries on four different continents. From Tokyo, Japan to Wellington, New Zealand, the Class of 2002 continues to spread the Kennedy Catholic ideals of courage and compassion through their service and leadership around the globe. Students spend anywhere from six weeks to an

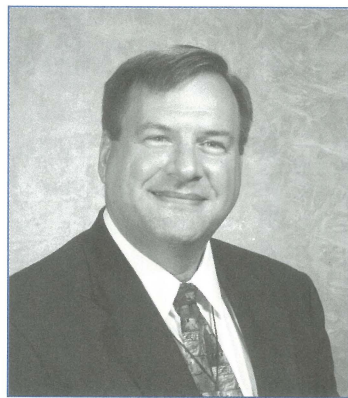
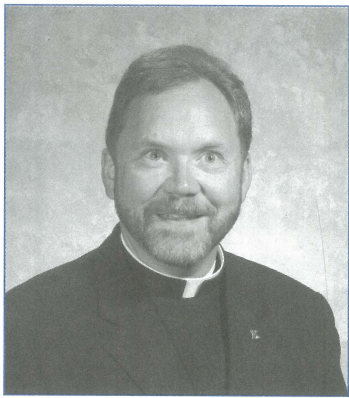
Class of 2002 on the move throughout the world

entire year abroad studying nursing, religion, biology, graphic design, international business and other disciplines. Check back in the spring, when The Gael will track down several of these international alumni and share their stories.



Kennedy Catholic Among Nation's Top 50

Kennedy Catholic High School (KCHS) was named one of the top 50 secondary schools in America this September by the Catholic High School Honor Roll. The Honor Roll rates schools based on academics, civic education and Catholic identity, for which KCHS was a category leader. Kennedy Catholic is one of only six schools in New York to earn the distinction. In recognition of this honor, the school was featured in the Sept. 22 issue of the Patent Trader.



A NEW LOOK FOR KENNEDY CATHOLIC

Schmidt becomes first lay principal in school's 80-year history
Rev. Norton assumes inaugural presidency

Nestled on 64 acres of lushness off Route 138 in Somers, Kennedy Catholic High School (KCHS) has provided Catholic education to young men and women for the better part of a century. Yet it remains, as former headmaster Rev. Stephen Norton says, the "best kept secret in Westchester and Putnam."

The latter is about to change, however, as the Archdiocese of New York recently approved a new administrative model that will allow Father Norton, now the president, to "bring Kennedy's good name beyond these 64 acres of property."

In celebrating the school's 80th anniversary with a Mass last September, Edward Cardinal Egan spoke of the need for Kennedy to maintain a strong Catholic high school presence in northern Westchester. Having served as headmaster for two years, Father Norton said there is an "incredible amount of gifts and talents" within the building. As president, his focus will be bringing them to their full potential.

With Father Norton ascending the ladder, Mr. Stephen Schmidt will assume the duties of principal. He

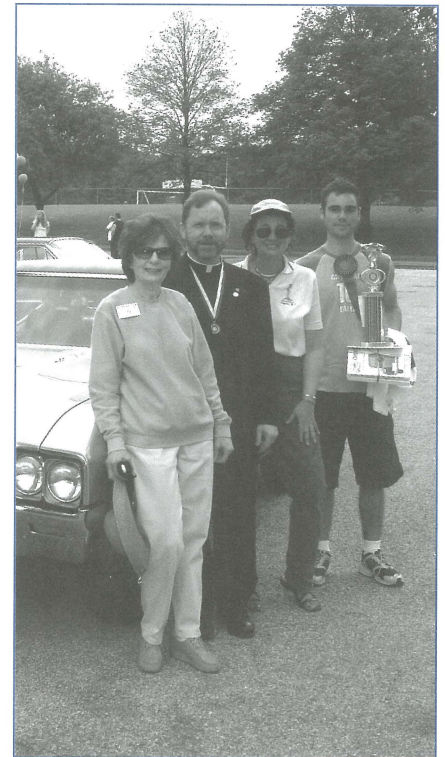
spent 13 years at Kennedy teaching computers, math and religion, leaving for Good Counsel in White Plains in 1994. Mr. Schmidt would return in the fall of 1999 as vice principal for academics.

With a bachelor's in math from Pace University and two master's degrees in education from Iona College, Schmidt said the move is the next logical step for him. On board with Father Norton's "team approach," the new principal is excited by the challenges his new position presents.

"The job is always something new and different with each class that comes through," he said. "You see the students here wanting to excel."

Effective since July 1, the changes will strengthen the current administration by utilizing talents more effectively. As the face of Kennedy Catholic, for example, Father Norton will have more time to spend meeting with students, parents and alumni. And though a formal search was conducted, Father Norton could not be happier with his new principal.

"He's just the right man," the president said, "and he was right here."



KENNEDY CATHOLIC HOSTS SOMERS ROTARY'S 2ND ANNUAL CLASSIC CAR DAY

2003 Alumnus Earns Top Award

Tout your fuel-efficient hybrids and better gas mileage all you want; sometimes, there's nothing quite like the raw power of a classic American muscle car, or the chic style of its more regal touring counterparts.

Both extremes were on display on the grounds of Kennedy Catholic May 28, when more than 2,000 classic car buffs participated in the up close and personal look at some of the area's

WHO'S WHO

Rev. Stephen P. Norton
President

Mr. Anthony Casella
Vice President for Advancement

Mr. David Concepcion
*Assistant Principal for
Student Life/Dean*

Mr. Lester McGuire
Vice President for Finance

Mr. Stephen T. Schmidt
Principal

Sister Susan Willis
Assistant Principal for Academics

wildest wheels. Sponsored the by Somers Rotary, the club's second annual Classic Car Day raised funds for local and international Rotary scholarships.

Alex Silverman '03 took home Best in Show honors with his 1969 Buick GS. The distinction earned him an overnight stay for two at Mohegan Sun, dinner for two at the casino's Pomeii & Caesar Restaurant, gift certificates for car parts and accessories, and his Buick will be featured on the 2006 T-shirts.

Not surprising, Silverman's father collects and restores vintage cars. His first-place finish at Classic Car Day first grew wheels at another show many years ago, when Silverman mentioned to his father that he liked a 1969 Buick. Realizing a potential father and son project in the making, the elder Silverman purchased the Buick and the two spent the next decade bringing it back to life.

"All the hard work paid off," the alumnus said. "I couldn't have done this without my father."

As part of the afternoon's festivities, Somers Rotary honored Kennedy Catholic President the Rev. Stephen P. Norton and Sgt. Joseph Lutz of the New York State Police for going "above and beyond" in the performance of their respective duties, Rotary President Helen Bowers said. The Somers Rotary also donated a defibrillator to the school, an important addition to the school's health office.

"We're not an island unto ourselves," Father Norton said. "We were absolutely thrilled to host an event like this because we believe it reaches out to the entire community."

The Kennedy Catholic band provided musical entertainment, while face painting by art students from the Pratt Institute and inflatable kids' rides kept the younger ones busy. The Blythedale Children's Hospital conducted a child safety seat check, and the State Police had their seatbelt convincer on hand. It was a fun-filled community event that was enjoyed by all.



KENNEDY CATHOLIC DEDICATES NEW ENTRANCE SIGN

Inaugural Senior Class Gift Serves as Memorial to Nolan Morales

Graduation evokes many emotions, none more poignant than remembering a classmate who should have been there with you, wearing his gown and proudly clutching his diploma.

On June 3, the Class of 2005 gathered in front of the school to pay lasting tribute to classmate Nolan Morales, who died earlier this year after a long illness. Their Senior Gift was a new granite sign for the entranceway to the school, now dedicated to the memory of their beloved classmate. The front of the polished eight-by-four foot carnelian granite sign boasts the school's name and logo etched in gold; the names of the Class of 2005 are engraved on the back, encircling an image of Nolan's senior portrait.

"We are very happy to remember Nolan in this way," President Rev. Stephen Norton said. "Our seniors obviously loved and respected him

greatly, because they raised the money to erect this beautiful new sign which will grace the entrance of our school campus for years to come."

Senior parent and Parent Advisory Board Co-President Mike Visovsky put Kennedy administrators in contact with a former student, and current neighbor and friend, Tom Alfredo of Alfredo LDC in Mount Kisco, N.Y. Mr. Alfredo aptly turned the design of Student Council President Bernie Zipprich into a 1,500-pound work of art.

At the June 5 graduation, 110 diplomas were awarded to the 109 seniors. One was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Morales in memory of their son.

"He was a wonderful person who brought lasting joy to so many," Father Norton said of Morales. "It is very fitting that a permanent memorial has been placed here at Kennedy Catholic."



FORE A GOOD CAUSE **Bright Sunshine for the KCHS Second Golf Outing**

After last year's downpour, the brilliant sunshine brightened the day for the supporters of the second annual Kennedy Catholic Classic held at Branton Woods Golf Club on Oct. 6. Now in its second year, the golf outing has already proven a winner, bringing together Kennedy Catholic's extended family – parents, friends, faculty, staff, contractors, and students for a day of fun and fairways on what Golf Digest and GOLF Magazine have dubbed "one of America's best new courses."

More than 95 duffers and hackers came out to support what is rapidly becoming a popular fundraiser for the school. Shortly after noon, golfers took to the links for the shotgun start by Event Chair Kevin Dwyer '72. We're happy to report that the KCHS faculty had some impressive feats on the day: the putting contest was won by history teacher Mr. Fred Katz, whose up and down earned him the prize. Not to be outdone, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds Chuck Garcia pushed Katz

to the limit with a putt that came within nanometers of the bottom of the cup.

Meanwhile out on the course, golfers were greeted by KCHS students, selling mulligans, raffle tickets and otherwise making sure a good time was had by all. Back at the clubhouse, the evening concluded with a terrific outdoor dinner, an awards presentation and the raffle drawing.

Proceeds from the event will be used for student scholarships and special projects.



Planting the Seeds

Students Spend Week with NY's Migrant Workers' Children

Following a weeklong stay with the Mustard Seed Migrant Ministry in Goshen, N.Y., Kennedy Catholic students learn what it means to live the Gospel message.

A "ministry of presence," the Mustard Seed Migrant Ministry was started 15 years ago by the Sisters of the Divine Compassion. While the Latino farming community works the Empire State's Black Dirt Area, its 90 children come to what Principal Stephen Schmidt dubbed the Sisters' "house of hospitality."

"It's a different world," said Sister Pam Wagner, who founded Mustard Seed with Sister Fran Liston in 1990, yet one which Kennedy Catholic students readily enter.

For two weeks every summer, the migrant children come to the house to find companionship with the Kennedy Catholic students. Together, they play games, swim in the pool and, perhaps most importantly, share conversation.

"It's not so much supervising, but being with the kids and spending time with them," Sister Pam said.

From Mustard Seed, Sister Pam hopes the high school students take back a "sense of oneness." That notion is stressed from the beginning of a group's weeklong stay as the Sisters explain the ministry is about "all of us together."

"It's just a great experience to watch the kids grow," said teacher Sister Barbara Heil, who has helped facilitate the school's involvement in the program for the better part of a decade.

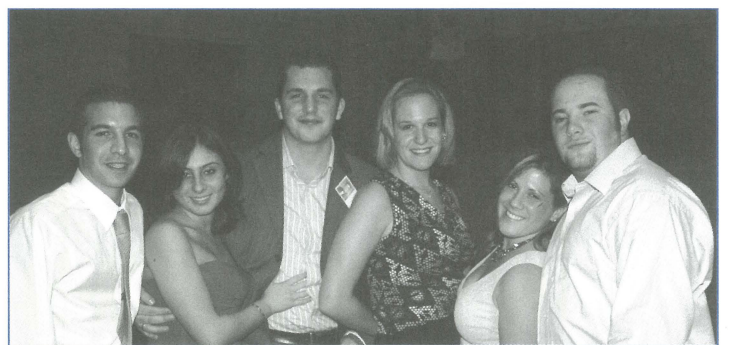
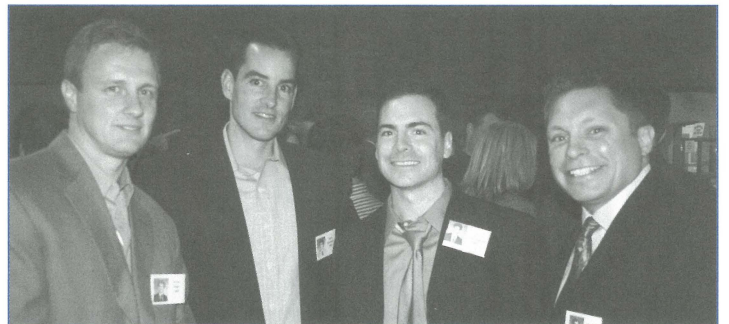
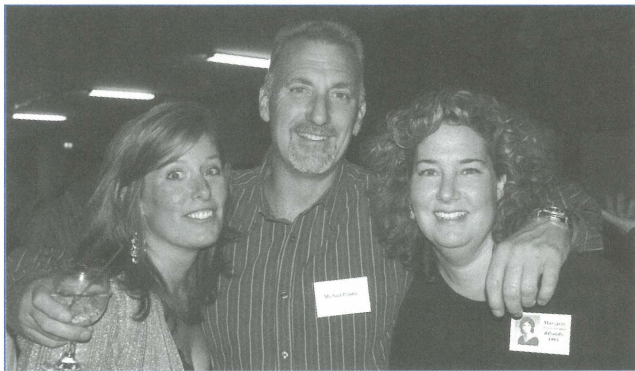
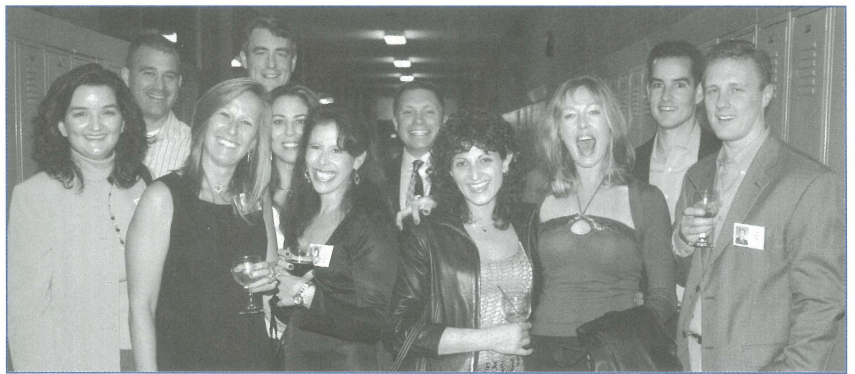
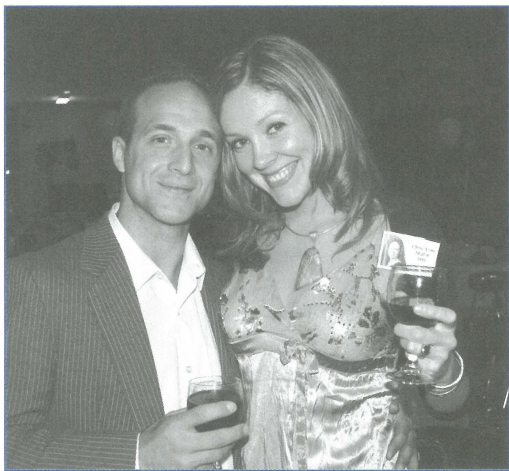
Kennedy Catholic's involvement with the Mustard Seed Ministry extends well beyond the summer months. At Thanksgiving, the students hold a food drive; for Christmas, each of the 90 migrant children receives a gift with his or her

name on it; and during Easter, each child will receive an Easter basket.

"The Kennedy kids are extremely involved in making things happen here year-round," Sister Pam said gratefully.

For more on this past summer's Goshen trip, visit the Gael News parents' newsletter online at www.kennedycatholic.org.





memories

Reunion 2005 Brings Together Four Decades of Alumni

They came from the West Coast to the East Coast, over one hundred and fifteen alumni came back to visit their alma mater this past Oct. 15. Under the leadership of Leo Cunningham, the Class of '85 led the way for the evening's activities that included tours of the school and visits with many former teachers.

The alumni reminisced about classes, teachers and the things they often did that would land them in the dean's office. But while some things had changed, like the size of the lockers and

greeting from the former principal, now Director of Alumni Relations, Sister Christopher O'Toole. Many Sisters of the Divine Compassion – Janet Meehan, Celeste Kelley, Barbara Heil – were on hand to greet and visit with their former students.

The evening was catered by current KCHS parent, Brian Ledley, of Ledley Food Service in Brewster, while the music was provided by disc jockey Anthony Pili '00. Each alum left with a gift, a Kennedy Catholic pint glass dec-

their bright new colors, and how young the new teachers looked, the familiar warm feelings for the school remained the same.

For some, Reunion 2005 began much like a typical day at the school, with a

orated with the school seal.

For Sister Christopher and Assistant Director of Alumni Relations Jacob Bergmeier, planning is already underway for Reunion 2006. Next year they hope to reach out and see even more of the wonderful people who are proud to call Kennedy Catholic High School their alma mater.

Reunion 2006

The New Year brings new possibilities and a whole new set of reunions. Planning for Reunion 2006 – Classes of '51, '56, '61, '66, '71, '76, '81, '86, '91, '96 and '01 – will begin with a meeting on Wednesday, January 18. Please join us if you would like to take part in organizing this memorable event. For more information, please contact our Alumni Office at (914) 232-5061 Ext. 118 or e-mail alumni@kennedycatholic.org.

‘The Calling’

’87 grad producing film on religious vocations

For alumnus David Raghelli ’87, who recently returned to his alma mater for a special screening of his film, “The Calling,” the title is both the question and the answer.

The notion of a calling is something we all ponder. What is God calling us to do? What is His will for our lives? Such eternal questions speak to the very core of our beings, with answers to bring true happiness and inner peace.

Three years ago, Mr. Raghelli was called to produce a film that traces the vocational journey of Orlando Castillo, a 22-year-old from posh South Tampa who decides he wants to become a priest. “The Calling” brings the emotionally intense process of discernment to life through the eyes of Castillo as he leaves his family behind to join the Family of Jesus Healers at their mission outside Lima, Peru.

“An individual’s call isn’t just

affecting them,” Mr. Raghelli noted, adding that one of the purposes of his film is for people to gain a better understanding of formation and vocations. “That’s something that I wanted to bring to the screen.”

Mr. Raghelli’s film received rave reviews from Kennedy Catholic’s religious and lay faculty during the summer screening. Director of Alumni Relations and math teacher Sister Christopher O’Toole noted that “The Calling” took her back to the early years of her own vocation, particularly the great sacrifice it entailed. She believes Raghelli’s film has captured that spirit in a meaningful way, providing insight and guidance to those realizing discerning their respective callings/vocations/respective vocations.

President of Kennedy Catholic, Rev. Stephen Norton was happy to host the screening, adding noting that “The Calling” would be of great educational

value in an academic high school setting such as Kennedy Catholic. The president said he hopes a more formal viewing of the film can take place at the school once the project is complete.

Mr. Raghelli shot more than 100 hours of footage, following body language when he could not keep up with the Spanish. He is presently seeking funding to complete the project and hopes to have a feature-length version ready by February 2006.

Mr. Raghelli said he would like to return to Peru one more time before calling it a wrap. In doing so, he would embody exactly what one member of the Family of Jesus Healers explained in the film was the point of their mission.

“The main reason is to walk with them,” she said.

Mr. Raghelli has already walked the walk. With a little help and generosity, he’s hoping “The Calling” can do the talking.

CALLING ALL TROOPS!

Are you an active or retired member of the U.S. Armed Forces? Did you serve our country in the recent Middle East conflict, Desert Storm, Korea, Vietnam or World War II? We here at Kennedy Catholic are very proud of you and would like to extend our appreciation by spotlighting you in our spring edition of The Gael. If you have defended our nation’s freedom in times of peace or war, we want to hear from you. Please contact Jacob Bergmeier at (914) 232-5061 Ext. 118, or e-mail jbergmeier@kennedycatholic.org for more information.

alumni news

We want to hear from you! Please fax (914-232-3416), email (alumni@kennedycatholic.org) or phone (914-232-5061 ext.118) in news about you to share with your classmates. Here is a list of notes that fellow alumni/alumnae shared with us from our Web site since our last newsletter:

1962

Dan Cunningham, has been a librarian in public, business, and law libraries for 25 years. He and his wife, Chris Planellas, celebrated their 22nd wedding anniversary last April.

1982

Russell Hansen, earned a BSME from Massachusetts Maritime Academy, an MS from the University of Southern California, a MBA from the University of Oklahoma, and received a commission as a Naval Officer for the Department of Defense. Last year he was deployed to Iraq as a member of a Special Operations Counterterrorism Team with the FBI. He is now home working as a Special Agent concerning matters of national security. He is married to Anne Hansen and has two daughters. They are expecting a boy in January of 2006.

1985

Leo Cunningham, is happy to announce the birth of his daughter, Rachel Grace Cunningham, on Sept. 28, 2005.

1987

Jean Sanchez-Maddalon, was promoted to CFO of American Business Media in New York City in 2002.

Jeanette Anthony Jakobson, earned her bachelor's degree in Social Work from Iona College. She has been married 14 years and is a mother to 6 children. She currently resides in Danbury, Conn.

1989

Dr. Cara Anthony, since graduating from KCHS, has received a bachelor's from Notre Dame, a master's from Berkley Theological Union and a doctorate in theology from Boston College. She is now married and a professor of theology at St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn.

Greg Howard, graduated from Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., with a BA in Marketing and is currently working for The Phantom Canyon Brewing Co. as General Manager.

1991

Maura Anthony Snell, earned a bachelor's in English from Marymount College and is now married with two daughters, Hannah and Brenna. She currently resides in Westborough, Mass.

1992

Jennifer Zeinoun Tallard, married Charles Tallard on Oct. 28, 2000. They currently live in Hinsdale, Ill., with their daughter, Madeline, born on Aug. 1, 2003.

1993

Jan C. Anthony, is married with a son, Jan C. Jr., and a daughter, Olivia. He lives in Highland, N.Y., and operates a health food store in New Paltz, N.Y.

1997

Lauren Anthony, presently resides in Brewster, N.Y., with her daughter, Chiara. She is currently working towards her medical massage therapy degree at the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy.

1998

Joseph Anthony, has gone on to receive a bachelor's in finance from Villanova University. He is currently living in Ardmore, Penn., with his wife. He is Vice President at Gregory FCA.

2000

Margaret Anthony, earned her bachelor's in biology from Scranton University. She now lives in Westborough, Mass., and works for Genzyme in a DNA testing lab for rare diseases. She is engaged to be married on June 17, 2006.

Maggie Revis, graduated from Loyola College in Maryland, where she continued to pursue her interest in Irish dance. While still at Kennedy Catholic, Revis competed in shows domestically and abroad. One summer, she was in the Broadway production of Michael Flatley's "Riverdance." She is currently traveling North America on the debut tour of the new Michael Flatley production, "Celtic Tiger," which opened in the United States on Sept. 27 with a large contingent of Kennedy Catholic alumni present.

2001

Michael Gumb, in August 2005, was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He is presently stationed at the USMC base in Quantico, Va.

INFORMATION UPDATE

Do you have any news? Have you moved? Let us know!

email: alumni@kennedycatholic.org • call: 914-232-5061 • fax: 914-509-1401

Name _____ Class _____

Married Name _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Alumni E-Mail Address _____

BUSINESS INFORMATION

Business _____ Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone () _____ E-Mail Address _____

Alumni Class Notes _____

Alumnus: if you have news about your family or your job, please let us know. If you are moving, please let us know your new address. **Parents:** If your son/daughter no longer maintains a permanent residence at your home, please send us his/her new address. We would like to keep both parents and sons/daughters in touch with Kennedy Catholic. Please check below to continue receiving *The Gael*

☐ Please keep me on the mailing list. My son's/daughter's new address is listed below

Name _____ Class _____

Address _____ Apt. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone () _____ Work Phone () _____

FIRST ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S DINNER

Please join the entire Kennedy Catholic community on Thursday, April 20 at the Villa Barone Hilltop Manor in Mahopac, N.Y., as the Rev. Stephen Norton hosts his first annual President's Dinner honoring alumni parent and former teacher Thomas Conklin. Mr. Conklin spent a number of years here as an educator, and currently serves as president of the Hudson Valley's Make-A-Wish Foundation. We are privileged to be honoring him with our Hall of Fame Award that evening, and sincerely hope you will give us the honor of your presence. For more information, please contact the Advancement Office at (914) 232-5061 Ext. 134.

IMPORTANT DATES

Mark 'Em Down

Get your date books out alumni, because you're going to want to jot these dates down. Please consider this a standing invitation to each.

DECEMBER 21 Christmas Concert, 7 p.m.

MARCH 3-5, 10-11 KCHS Drama
presents "42nd Street"

APRIL 20 Presidents' Dinner

MAY 11 Spring Concert, 7 p.m.

JUNE 7 Alumni Band Concert

For more information regarding any of the aforementioned events, please contact the Alumni Office at (914) 232-5061 or e-mail alumni@kennedycatholic.org.

Kennedy Catholic HIGH SCHOOL
ADVANCEMENT OFFICE
54 Route 138 • Somers, NY 10589

The Gael is produced by the Advancement Office. If you have any questions, comments or news you would like to share with us, please call (914) 232-5061 ext. 134, or email alumni@kennedycatholic.org.

Publisher: Rev. Stephen P. Norton,

Editor in Chief: Anthony J. Casella

Associate Editor: Jacob Bergmeier

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Contributing Writers: Jacob Bergmeier,
Alex Malecki, Meghan Lange

Design and Printing: TSJ Graphics

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 8951
White Plains, NY