

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 1
June 5, 2009

Welcome to the new School Year! After a two-month hiatus on communications with the SMS community, this first issue will bring us all up to date with what has happened and what is happening in school. For people new to SMS, the Principal's Bulletin is a weekly publication, published every Friday while school is in session. It contains information on past events, commentaries, reminders, announcements, future events and activities, updates, and other issues that the community needs to know. The Principal's Bulletin is our life line to effective communications within the SMS family.

Hard copies of the Principal's Bulletin are distributed to students on Friday afternoons. Please make it a habit to ask your child or ward for the bulletin. Copies are also available in the Business Office. For parents and interested parties outside Sagada, the bulletin is also posted in the SMSS web site (www.smssagada.org) and the link is emailed to the St. Mary's School Yahoo Groups. If you wish to receive the link in your email, we will be happy to add your email address to the distribution list.

PAST EVENTS

In spite of an hour delay due to an unscheduled brownout and the usual afternoon showers, the graduation ceremony honoring the Class of 2009 went smoothly on Thursday, April 2, 2009. Highlights included the grand march from Stapleton Hall to the Quadrangle, complete with torches, banners, gongs, and indigenous "street" dancing. Resplendent in their caps and gowns were 35 graduates of the Class of 2009, followed by the first 5th Year post graduates, 27 members of the Batch of 1959 (the biggest turn-out of golden jubilarians since we started the tradition of "re-graduating" the SMS alumni of fifty years ago), and of course the faculty, the alumni, and the Board of Trustees. The two speakers for the evening were Atty. Warren Luyaben (representing the Batch of 1959) and Aginaya Tuguinay, the chosen class speaker for the Class of 2009. The ceremony also featured the first batch of graduates from the newly established SMS Kindergarten who, together with their high school counterparts, sang a rousing rendition of "We Are the Young" as the graduates gave flowers and "everlasting" leis to their parents and the alumni as a token of thanksgiving. The evening culminated in a toast of *tapey* to the new graduates.

The day before, activities included social interaction and fellowship sessions between the Class of 2009 and the Batch of 1959 who shared their treasured memories of their years at SMS. They took the opportunity to give invaluable advice to the young graduates, in the spirit of the SMSSA *dap-ay*. During the Baccalaureate service, each of the "old timers" also had a chance to introduce themselves to the whole student body, while representatives of the graduating class of 2009 shared their reflections with their younger colleagues. The two groups later planted a memorial "almaciga" tree as a symbol of bonding and as a challenge to keep the SMS *tagowan* alive and thriving. The evening culminated in a joint dinner hosted by the parents of the senior class.

After a week of harried activity and tremendous energy, the campus closed down for the summer.

During the summer months, other than the annual maintenance work and the summer work study program for students to earn their tuition, life on campus was very subdued. The University of the Philippines-Baguio Department of Communications and Arts rented the school facilities for a three-day workshop on creative writing from April 28-30. An UPCAT Review was held the week after for the incoming senior class to prepare them for the upcoming entrance tests for college admission, free of charge. I would like to express my deep gratitude to Professor Louie Agnir-Paraan and her team (Amy Rebanco, Jose Allan Arellano, and Greg Agatep) for **volunteering** their time in conducting this invaluable service. The team promises to come back again next year.

CURRENT EVENTS

I am pleased to report that SMS now has a complete roster of qualified teachers and support staff, in accordance to the accreditation requirements of the Association of Christian Schools and Universities (ACSU) which is scheduled to visit us this school year.

Welcome back to the returning faculty and staff: Beverly Ticobay (English), Cora Deligen (Math), Michael Benter (Social Studies/Filipino), Marjorie Hangdaan, Alma Bagano, and Nemia Lite (Science), Janet Eason (Art), and Lissa Octaviano (Kindergarten and HS Music). Welcome back also to my hardworking staff Kym Ledesma, Chiqui Say-awen, Junia Tulipa, Nieva Ananayo, and Julie Pasiteng. Congratulations to Daniel Ambasing who has been granted tenure at SMS after three years of probationary service.

Welcome to the new faculty and staff who have joined our SMS family this school year: Racquel Domanog Killy (from Sagada) and Melvin Magsanoc (Baguio) who will join the English Department; Arlene Agbasil (Baguio) in Filipino; Geraldine Capsula (Itogon) in Social Studies; Chesya Epa (Baler, Aurora) in Math; Gay Pascual (Besao) in Science.

New to the staff are: Lienden Biang (Tadian) as the school Librarian; Elpidio Daketan (Tadian) as the network administrator; and Mario and Lourdes Aligo (Sagada) as the Dorm Master and Dorm Matron. Randy Deligen (Sagada) will be the instructor for the SMS Cultural Troupe and C.A.T.

Also, welcome to Jenny Calang-ad Bicarne as the school guidance counselor and Marie Odlos as the school accountant. Our best wishes to Chiqui Say-awen who will move on to the DepEd District Office in the middle of June.

I am pleased to announce that Ms. Nemia Lite has assumed the role of Assistant Principal. Ms. Lite has been with the SMS faculty since SY 2003-2004. It is my sincerest hope that she will take my place as Principal when I finally retire.

As of today, June 5, enrollment figures stand as follows: 1st Year – 43; 2nd Year – 47; 3rd Year – 49; 4th Year – 54; and 5th Year – 9, a total of 202 students. Kindergarten enrolment figures stand at a total of 49 – 24 in Kinder I and 25 in Kinder II.

REMINDERS: The following are excerpts from the Student Handbook:

Uniforms and Free Dress: Please note that on Mondays, we observe “free dress” to allow at least three days for clothes to dry, particularly during this rainy season. However, a dress code is still in force, prohibiting the use of “tsinelas,” tattered clothing, revealing attire, and clothes that advertise alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, or have inappropriate images or language.

IDs Cards will be issued within the next week, and students are expected to wear their IDs at all times during the school day.

Lockers have been assigned, and students are expected to buy locks for their lockers. Lockers may not be shared even with friends. Please be responsible in keeping keys and reporting any tampering.

Cell Phones are totally banned from campus. Cell phones that are seen, heard, used, or even brought in on campus will be confiscated by the Principal. Cell phones on campus are a source of theft, distraction, and cheating. A similar prohibition has been issued by the Department of Education. In cases of emergencies, parents may contact their children through the Office cell phone (0928-788-0077), or through the Dorm Master (0920-884-8742) after school hours.

Internet Games: SMS students are prohibited from playing Internet games on school computers and in Internet Cafes. Many students have already been addicted to such games. School computers contain authorized educational games (e.g. Typing Master, and other word games), and students are welcome to use these. The I.T. Department has also issued a number of guidelines, rules, and regulations for the use of school computers, USBs, and other computer accessories. Please abide by these rules to protect our system for viruses.

Absences and Tardies: Students who have legitimate reasons for being absent from class (e.g. sickness, family emergencies) must bring a note from their parents explaining the absence. The note must be submitted to the Business Office when the student returns to school. Failure to do so constitutes a “class cut” and warrant disciplinary action like cleaning the campus on Saturdays. Classes start at 7:25 a.m., lunch break is from 11:25 to 12:25, and school ends at 4:15 p.m. Mondays through Fridays. A list of after school activities, meetings, and practices will be published later.

FUTURE EVENTS:

Thursday, June 11	Kinder PTA Meeting at 4:30 in the School Theater
Friday, June 12	No classes (Independence Day)
Saturday, June 13	SMSSI Quarterly Board Meeting in Baguio
Friday, June 26	First School Dance
Saturday, June 27	1 st High School PTA Meeting at 10 a.m. in the School Theater

A veteran faculty member commented recently: “It’s only the first week of school, and I am already exhausted!” I agreed. Students and faculty have all looked forward towards the opening of school, and our efforts in preparations, orientations, and planning have all resulted in a very smooth 1st day of school. Except for 14 students who “extended” their vacations for an extra day, we all delved right into the business of education. SY 2009-2010 promises to be a great year, and perhaps the best year for me at SMS. My congratulations to our students, faculty and staff, and parents for a job well done!

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal