

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 2
June 11, 2009

Dear Students, Parents, Guardians, Alumni, and Friends

School is up and running smoothly, thanks to the planning done by the faculty and staff last summer. Our enrollment has increased to 206 as of today, and hopefully this will be stabilized this week. We have been made aware that several schools in Baguio and Manila have moved their opening of classes as a precaution against swine flu. On the other hand (forgive my flippancy), Sagada is experiencing a shortage of pork in the market, because there seems to be a shortage of pigs in Abatan. After a week of heavy monsoon rain, the weather these past two days has been gorgeous, complete with blue skies, sunshine, and cool evenings. I feel like singing one of the songs I composed in 1977 "Sagada, you're the place for me!"

Past Events:

The school held its first School Mass last Friday, June 5, with the school chaplain, Fr. Princl Balitog, challenging the student body to "spread the good news" by becoming and being true Christian models. I consider this to be a very relevant and timely message because our theme for Christian Values this quarter is focused on respect – towards elders, towards each other, towards one's self, and towards God's creations. In short, respecting one another is the start of being Christian. Although I get amused when I see freshmen boys chasing the girls and pulling their pigtails, the faculty and I are bent on reminding them that high school students don't do those things anymore. As for respect for the environment, I congratulate Mr. Randy Deligen, Mr. and Mrs. Aligo, and Daniel Ambasing, because the campus is, for the most part, clean and green, although I still see a few candy wrappers in urinals and in other odd places. Today, I witnessed a faculty member receiving a double salute and a happy "Good Morning" from the Honor Guards (formerly CAT) who were stationed at the SMS gate prior to flag raising. I felt like Fidel Ramos (Hail to the Chief!) when it was my turn to get greeted.

Classes are in full swing. The kindergarten classes started last Monday. We are truly back to the business of education.

Club Exposition: Today, afternoon classes will be truncated into 40-minute periods to allow students to know more about and choose their clubs and activities. According to, every student at SMS must actively belong to and participate in at least one activity or sport. Some may choose to have two activities, depending on time and commitment.

Future Events:

June 12 is a national holiday as it is the date when our original republic was born. However, in preparation for the NCAE (National Career Aptitude Exam) which is to be administered to all 4th Year students on August 26, several review sessions will be held in successive weekends. On June 12, the review for English will be held on campus from 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. by the English Department. Attendance is mandatory, and, with the agreement of the PTA last year, a fine will be imposed on those who miss the review which is free of charge.

Please note that the NCAE is one of the bases for acceptance to college, and CHED and DOST scholarships. The test measures a student's aptitude or potential in areas like mathematical ability, verbal ability, scientific reasoning, and reading comprehension, plus entrepreneurial skills and vocational aptitude.

I will be leaving this weekend to attend the quarterly SMSSI Board of Trustees Meeting in Trinidad. Among the issues to be discussed are: a review of the 2008-2009 financial statements, policies on educational benefits for faculty dependents, sibling tuition discounts for two or more siblings enrolled at SMS, accreditation, and the next 5-year strategic plan.

Next week's highlight is the visit of Ms. Gina Lopez of ABS-CBN Foundation to both SMS and Ambasing Elementary School. She will meet with the teachers of the Sagada School District and members of the LGU on Saturday, June 20. ABS-CBN Foundation is extremely committed to programs in education (hence its support for SMS and AES, and other Sagada schools), protection of children (Bantay Bata), and protection of the environment (Bantay Kalikasan).

Feature

This year, the Principal's Bulletin is dedicating space to feature members of the SMS community (faculty, students, alumni, support organizations, and parents), as a forum of sharing ideas, reflections, personal philosophies, and other information. As an initial offering, I would like to feature my administrative partner, Ms. Nemia Lite, the newly appointed Assistant Principal at SMS.

"As a Bachelor of Science graduate, majoring in Physics for Teachers, I have been a science and a math teacher since I entered the teaching profession. I admit I didn't give much consideration to the other subjects. I thought science and math are most important subjects for students to learn in order for them to survive in this world. I can still remember the earlier times where we intensely debated on what subjects to emphasize in our curriculum with each teacher insisting on his own field of specialization. Since I was so focused on my subjects, I didn't spare time to really understand and to ponder on the need to study the Humanities subjects particularly Social Studies.

This year I decided to broaden my horizon by taking the challenge of handling Economics, which is the Social Studies subject for the fourth year students. Last May, I spent three weeks reading Economics books to prepare myself for the school year. It was very difficult for me to adjust psychologically that I will be more of a social studies teacher than a science teacher even with a good economics background in my Public Administration degree. I was worried. However, I forgot about my anxiety when I first met my class on the first day of school. As I study and teach the subject, my attitude toward it was transformed. I realized it is a practical subject and it is as important as the x,y,z in math and the projectile motion and vector analysis in physics.

Broadening our horizons offers us opportunities to learn. It opens doors for growth. It helps us understand others. I believe that was the goal when we did the curriculum together, for us to explore and make connections of all the disciplines and teach our students to become a person who shares himself while excelling in his field of interest.

Nemia Lite

Ms. Nemia Ngalob Lite from Padangaan, Besao, is married to Roderick Lite of La Trinidad, and has three children. She is a graduate of St. James High School in Besao, Philippine Normal University (B.S.E. major in Physics) and University of the Cordilleras, where she received a Master's Degree in Public Administration. This school year is her 6th year at SMSS, not counting a year of service in this school prior to its incorporation in 2004

More next week:
Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal