

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 13 & 14
September 11 & 18, 2009

Dear Parents, Students, Alumni, and Friends:

My apologies for not having the bulletin published last Friday, September 11. The Wednesday before, I had gone to Aguid with municipal engineers to measure the pathway from Aguid to Bomod-ok in anticipation of the proposed ABS-CBN eco-tourism project in Sagada. It began to rain early that day, and on my way back, I slipped and hurt my knee. I was incapacitated that Wednesday and the rest of the week as my bruised kneecap caused me a lot of pain. My reflection? I am indeed getting old. I can't afford to do these mountain hikes anymore.

The following was my reflection for the September 11 bulletin: It seems that the entire country needs a lesson in effective communication. Last Saturday, September 5, I was informed by my administrative assistant Kym Ledesma that the government had declared last Monday, September 7 a national holiday to pay homage to Erano Manalo, the head of Iglesia ni Kristo, who was to be buried that day in Manila. Kym had heard the information from television news. I made the decision to hold classes on Monday to make up for the last day that we owed due to the closure of the school last July. Save for a few absences, the attendance that day was normal. Unfortunately, the case was not the same for other schools. There was confusion among public schools, and kids who went to school last Monday were sent back home. The whole situation is becoming ridiculous. For one, if decisions are to be made, could they not have been done earlier for more effective dissemination? Secondly, although it is always nice to have a break or holiday, too many disruptions throw off the best made plans, and we know that there have been too many disruptions in July and August, and now September. Even the business climate is affected. Employers who have to stay open are required to pay double or one-and-a half holiday pay. Banks are closed, and therefore financial transactions have to be delayed. For the majority of us who look ahead to plan ahead, living in this country, even in a small remote place like Sagada, is becoming more and more frustrating.

Please note that September 21, Monday, has been declared a holiday to celebrate Eid, the end of the Ramadan period of the Islamic calendar. The holiday is similar to Easter Sunday which ends the season of Lent in the Christian calendar. This holiday, however, has been incorporated into the school calendar before the start of school.

OTHER NEWS

Mrs. Rose Bawing Nabert (Class '62) made a special visit to the school last Tuesday, September 08. She initiated talks with the future class of 2012 (currently the sophomores) to establish links with each other in anticipation of the big centennial celebration, reunion, and graduation in March 2012. Class 62 will be celebrating their golden anniversary; our sophomores will be the graduating class that year; the school will host the grand alumni homecoming (held in Sagada every four years), and the school will become 100 years old. She also held a training session with the Fourth Year students on CPR, using equipment that she has donated to the school. She also addressed the entire student body on drug education at the end of the day. Our thanks to Rose for sharing her expertise with her alma mater. Rose

also has been a prime mover during the recently held medical mission from Canada which visited Baguio, Trinidad, Sabangan, Besao, and Sagada.

SPRINT Curriculum Workshop: Nemia Lite and Beverly Ticobay left for Baguio on Friday, September 11, to attend a SPRINT meeting to discuss the Christian Education curriculum for Episcopal schools. Mrs. Lauyen, the Christian Education Supervisor for the Episcopal Diocese for North Central Philippines, plus Easter School and Brent, have spearheaded the project. Once the curriculum is finalized and approved by the powers that be, SMS will be looking at more effective ways to deliver the curriculum.

Alumni Board News: Alma Bagano, our SMSS alumni liaison, also went to Baguio to attend a Board of Directors meeting of the Alumni Association (SMSSAA). Among the issues discussed were the “re-registering” of the association with the Securities and Exchange Commission, the preparations for the forthcoming Grand Alumni Homecoming in 2012, which is also the centennial anniversary of SMS, and plans for fundraising to support operations and projects of the association. These initial talks will be continued this coming weekend (Sept. 19) in Baguio.

Christian Education Films: Considering many of our teachers were on official leave to attend these important meetings, the school held a series of three film showings on Thursday and Friday as part of our plans to acquaint and reinforce our Christian Education curriculum: The movie “The Bible” presented the first part of Genesis, from the Creation to Abraham; “The Ten Commandments” focused on Exodus, Moses, and Joshua; and “The Greatest Story Ever Told” presented the life of Christ from birth to resurrection. Guide questions were issued, and further discussions will be held during homerooms. Reflection papers will be submitted and graded as major projects in English, Filipino, and Social Studies.

Gymnasium Project Update: Approximately US\$10,000 has been remitted by our friends and alumni in the States and in Canada designated for the continuation of the gym project. We have already started the work to construct the road and the supporting walls of the gym shower rooms and the water cistern. Thanks to Mr. Ciano Baldo and Patrick Cirilo, the floor plan of the 2nd phase of the gym project has been completed. SMS parents, skilled or unskilled, who wish to work at the site to earn money for school tuition, may make arrangements with John Padalla and the Business Office.

Bangaan Fiesta Involvement: Our SMS Varsity Basketball team has been invited to play in exhibition games during the Bangaan Fiesta. Tentatively, the team will play on Sunday, September 20. The time is still being discussed. Mr. Daniel Ambasing will lead the delegation and bring the non-northern barangays back home. Those who wish to stay at Bangaan after the game must have written permission from their parents. **Please note that school rules apply to all SMS students** during the barangay fiesta.

Our 4th Year Music Class has been invited to perform as an intermission number during the division pop quiz finals at St. Joe’s Restaurant this Friday morning, September 18. Congratulations to the 4th Year students who “sang their hearts out” and impressed the audience composed of delegates to the pop com regional finals, the DepEd, and the National Population Commission. Mayor Latawan, being an SMS alumnus, was especially proud to see the students of his alma mater “wow the audience!” Mr. Dalang of DepEd remarked that he wished that the Cordillera hymn which was sung at the start of the program, had been performed with the same enthusiasm and clarity as our number. The senior class earned

performance grade of 95 this morning. A student asked why not 99? I replied because the song began in a tentative manner (the students were nervous and self-conscious), but by the time the song progressed, everyone started enjoying themselves. Well done, class of 2010! You make us proud!

From the Guidance Office: Please take note of the following dates and deadlines that pertain to college admissions:

Ateneo de Manila	Test Date: September 19 in Baguio
University of Santo Tomas	Test Date: October 4 in Baguio
Benguet State University	Test Date: Nov. 22 in Bontoc
St. Louis University	Test Date: October 24 in Bontoc; also weekends in Oct & Nov.
Philippine Normal University	Test Date: December 6 at PNU
Mapua Institute of Technology	Test Dates: August to March in Mapua
Trinity Univeristy of Asia	Test Dates: Sept to March (Saturdays and summer)
DOST Scholarships	Test Date: Nov.15 in Bontoc

The aforementioned dates are for the actual entrance exams dates. Please check with Ms. Jenny Bicarme in the Guidance Office for requirements and deadlines for applications for the exams.

Forthcoming Events:

September 21 –	Special National Holiday (no classes)
September 25 & 26 –	SMS Intramurals
September 26, 10 a.m.	Proposed 2 nd Quarter PTA Meeting
September 26, after lunch:	Parent-Teacher-Student Conferences for out of towners
September 28-October 1-	PTS Conferences for those in Sagada and nearby areas
October 15-16	2 nd Quarter Exams

Faculty Corner: *This week's article is written by Alma Bawing Bagano, an alumna of Batch '77. For the past five years, Alma has been heavily involved in school matters, ranging from teaching General Science, serving as Postboy Advisor, pitching in as a temporary librarian, and serving as liaison for SMS alumni and supporters. Alma is also helping out in the development plans for the ABS-CBN eco-tourism projects for Sagada.*

Over the five years that I worked at St. Mary's, two things touch my heart and keep me going. These also make it hard for me to let go.

First are my personal sentiments of the school. This feeling is something I would share with a heart-tugging emotion, and I am sure most alumni feel the same way I do. But they don't see the joys and laughter I hear in the campus every day, nor the frustrations that sometimes cloud my hopes and dreams when there is trouble (once in a while). But despite frustrations, what overwhelms me most is the outpouring support (given with LOVE) from the alumni to their alma mater. I have yet to hear of an alumni association as strong as the SMSS Alumni Association. The school cannot miss to attribute its "best performance" rating because of alumni support. Let me share by copying from the souvenir program of the 4th North America Alumni Conference in Vancouver last August:

“Seven years ago (2003), the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Philippines, owner/administrator of SMSS, announced that due to financial constraints, it could no longer maintain the operations of the school beyond year 2005. THANK YOU ALL to the various donations (be it in cash, in kind, service or prayers, big and small), SMSS is not only alive; it has regained its stature as a premier school of learning in the Philippines’ Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).”

I would like to add by acknowledging the donations of the FRIENDS of ALUMNI who don’t have a stake to the school but who continue to support us. The first 20 Major Donors and sponsors in our fund raising activities are big national corporations, solicited by alumni. We could not have gone this far without them. Salamat po!

We are true to our motto: “Adi Tako Bokodan di Gawis” (Let us not be Selfish with the Good), and to our Christian upbringing that blessings come back to us a thousand fold when “we spread the good around everywhere”.

Speaking of alumni, the school WELCOMES the following who are home in Sagada from overseas: Nellie Abeya-Pitog, (Class ‘61), Mary Capuyan Zabala (Class ‘56), Rose Bawing-Nabert (Class ‘62), Edwin (Class ‘66) and Mia (Class ‘67) Abeya, Joel Pakiwe (Class ‘93), and others I may have missed to meet.

Second is my work in the school. I have been witness to the many dreams the children today have. These desires stem from many sources, but usually, at least partially, originate from direct experiences a child has with an activity. With the first quarter over, my table is again piled up with reflection papers dating all the way back from the first week of school in June, which the teachers asked their students to write. These papers land in my lap after they have been commented on and graded by the teachers for me to pick some for the Postboy publication. I feel awed and surprised at the imagination, critical thinking and research ability the students can do – I wish I could publish them all! For these children, a new hope will stem due from the constant written and oral assessments they are trained to do in school. It will not only open up the possibility of writing as a future career but also proper articulation as part of their life. They will be professionals who will not only be good at what they do but leaders of a generation of people who could express themselves literally and orally. The unconscious motive of eventually turning them into future writers and resource speakers is a legacy we can give to them. We dream of seeing them able to cope with the changing times through the skills and values they learn and pick up from this school.

It is these sentiments that make me feel responsible in looking after the welfare of the school as long as I am here (and beyond that, when I eventually “retire”).

Alma Louise Bawing-Bagano (Cl ‘77)
Sci-1 Teacher, ~~The Sagada Postboy~~ Adviser
Alumni Liaison Officer

Until next week, enjoy the three-day break!

Dennis Gomowad Faustino
Principal