

Saint Mary's School of Sagada
PRINCIPAL'S BULLETIN, 2009-2010 SERIES # 22
December 17, 2009

Dear Parents, Students, Alumni, and Friends:

I would like to greet everyone a very merry Christmas, and thank the Lord for all the blessings He has bestowed upon the school and its community this past year. Indeed, it has been a fruitful year for the school with all its awards and distinctions. Nevertheless, we also had our share of trials and tribulations, and we need to be cognizant that all of us in Sagada have been luckier than others during the past disasters that have adversely affected other communities. As we celebrate this coming Christmas season, let us be mindful of the needs of others, and "share what we have without care."

Congratulations to Marciana Hangdaan for winning the girls' badminton tournament during the provincial meet held two weeks ago. She qualifies for the CARAA games to be held in Ifugao in January. Congratulations likewise to Kim Antonette Lopez, whose artwork was chosen during the Dep-Ed Mountain Province Division Logo contest held two weeks ago. Her design will be used as the official Division Seal and Logo in all its printed correspondences.

Recap of my trip to Baguio and Manila Nov 29-Dec 7.

On Sunday, November 29, The SMSSI Board of Trustees held its 3rd Quarter Meeting in the residence of Mr. Rufino Bomasang in Baguio. The following developments have been discussed and approved:

- The election of Mrs. Nellie Abeya Pit-og as a member of the Board, and her appointment as the chair of the Scholarship Fund Solicitation Committee. (Since this time, she has recruited Ms. Marie Olocan Buring and Mrs. Soledad Belingon as members of her committee on fundraising. Ms. Lita Killip will continue her fundraising efforts in North America through SMSSAFF.)
- The BOT also made the decision to sell the donated Pampanga property in order to augment school funds operations, as this school year is the end of the faculty chairs subsidy from individuals from abroad, corporations, and other institutions. An executive committee composed of Virgilio Bucat, Evelyn Forbes, and Rufino Bomasang will oversee the sale of the school asset.
- Upon the recommendation of the Finance Committee, and approval of the Board, the following policies were passed, to take effect SY 2010-2011:
 - A 10% surcharge will be levied on all outstanding accounts, to include tuition, canteen charges, school supplies, and dormitory fees.
 - Transferees to SMS in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Year levels, coming from public schools and non-ESC private schools will pay full tuition for every year of enrollment. Transferees who are certified recipients of ESC funds from other schools will pay only the parent counterpart of tuition and fees.
 - In interscholastic competitions (e.g. provincial meet, press conferences, math and science fairs), the school will share 50% of the cost, net of subsidies by government and individual sponsors. The school will shoulder all chaperone expenses. In district competitions (Sagada), there are usually no expenses other than occasional transportation to the nearby Sagada barangays, which the school provides. The policy covers expenses for transportation, meals, and registration fees during **division** and **regional** level competitions, and these are partially subsidized by local government. The policy does not cover expenses for national level competitions, as funds are provided by the provincial and regional government at this level.
 - The next Board of Trustees and General Annual Meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on the morning of March 27, which is also the date for graduation.

I met with Ms. Gina Lopez and her staff on Tuesday, December 1, to discuss the developments of her Eco-Tourism projects for Sagada. She reiterated her commitment to solicit funds to build pathways and rest areas initially for Lumiang, Sumaging, and Bomod-ok. All of us are hopeful to start the projects by February. The barangays of Ambasing, Bugang, Pide, Aguid, and Fidelisan have agreed in principle to provide free labor as their counterpart in the project. In addition to infrastructure developments, the project involves community education and training. To start off, Daniel Thalkar, our Peace Corps volunteer in Sagada, and I are currently designing a program of workshops to professionally train members of SEGA and SAGA in terms of knowledge of Sagada historical and geographical facts and figures, personal social interaction, and effective communications with tourists. Eventually, other trainings on livelihood, hotel and restaurant management, and environmental protection and cultural preservation will be held in the future. In exchange for the Sagada deal, I have been appointed as an educational consultant for her adopted schools in Quezon City, Pampanga, and Calauan, Laguna which is the relocation site for squatters who used to live along the Pasig river.

On December 2, I met with the High School Principal of International School to arrange for some of his teachers to come to SMS during the “summer” months of IS (June-July). As we are embarking on reviewing our curriculum in Math and Science, my objective is to provide workshops during weekends for our teachers, and other high school teachers in Sagada. The focus will be on best teaching practices to enhance the delivery of Math and Science to our students.

On Friday Dec 4, I also met with Ms. Zen Dimalanta, the head of the E-Media department of the ABS-CBN Foundation. Ms. Dimalanta has been responsible for raising funds for the Ambasing computer building, the donation of dictionaries for every Sagada elementary school classroom, and the ongoing trainings of Sagada teachers in student-centered teaching strategies. Her main thrust for AES is to look for funds for musical instruments and art supplies, plus chalk-free whiteboards.

Another upcoming major project with ABS-CBN Foundation, DepEd, and SMS is the Summer English Institute-- an ongoing teacher training program aimed to upgrade the communication skills of teachers in English. The program will involve the participation of teachers in the entire Mountain Province division. The first week-long series of workshops is scheduled in the third week of April 2010, to be hosted by SMS. Several resource persons have already indicated their willingness to volunteer: Dr. Lucris Aguir-Paraan and her team of trainers from the University of the Philippines, Daniel Thalkar and his team of Peace Corps volunteers, retired teachers from International School, and Dr. Henry Tenedero and his team from Baguio. The training modules are currently being discussed and designed. Once tested, the modules can be applied in future summers to other sites in the province such as Natonin or Barlig, and Bontoc. My thanks to Zen Dimalanta, Nellie Ballola, Dr. Mary Langa-yan and Ms. Irene Bakisan of DepEd, and Gov. Maximo Dalog for their commitment to this project.

Dr. Paraan has also agreed to return to Sagada to conduct an UPCAT/NCAE review for our incoming SMS seniors this summer. I credit Ms. Paraan and her team, and of course, our SMS faculty, for the wonderful NCAE scores that our students have achieved for the past two years. As a reference, SMS had an average of 75 during the first year our seniors had taken the NCAE exams. The following year, the graduating class achieved an average of 77. When the school mandated a week-long summer review for incoming 4th Year students two summers ago, the average jumped 6 percentile points to 84 while the Mountain Province average was 75. This year’s seniors achieved an average of 86 in the exam held last August. 62 % (35 out of 56) of the class of 2010 received a general scholastic aptitude score of 86 (high average rating) and above. 11 students garnered an average of 98-99 (excellent rating).

The NCAE results for 4th Year students, our being number 1 in NAT scores for last year's second year students, our achievements in art, music, sports, and academic competitions continue to re-affirm the many wonderful things we are doing at SMS. Congratulations SMS! Let's keep it up!

Also on Friday, December 4, I attended the Lambak 2009, a celebration of Cordillera culture organized by the SMS Alumni Association--Manila Chapter as a fundraiser for their sponsorship of one faculty chair to SMS. I made a presentation of the next 5-year strategic plan and an update to the many achievements of SMS in the past year. I also distributed copies of the Sagada Postboy. The highlight of the evening was the wonderful program of Cordillera cultural songs and dances held in a beautiful amphitheater in the midst of Cathedral Heights in Quezon City. It was a special treat to be with recent SMS graduates like Debra Amonte, Aginaya Tuguinay, Joey Rogers, Conyap Omaweng, and Alexander Bangsail. For those who are members of the SMS Yahoo groups, the pictures can be accessed through YouTube.

Finally, on Saturday, December 5, I conducted a whole day workshop for the faculty of Betty Go-Belmonte as a refresher course on student-centered instruction. BGBES ranked 13th of 96 Quezon City schools in last year's NAT after being ranked one the lowest in previous exams. The 21 teachers who attended our workshop on this methodology last July 2008, attest to the effectiveness of the methodology and convinced their colleagues to apply it whenever possible, in spite of their large class sizes. Mayor Belmonte was so happy about the results that he convinced his Sangguniang Bayan to appropriate P2 M from the city coffers to provide the necessary resources to BGBES to enhance the program. On Sunday, I went shopping while Bingo Aligo, a 5th Year SMS student who intends to take education as a career, took the Phil. Normal University entrance exam. He is also being considered as a Phinma scholar. On Monday, I travelled back to Sagada.

HS PTA 3rd Quarter Meeting: The main agenda for the PTA meeting held last Saturday, December 12, focused on the preparations for the Cordillera Day/Christmas Party/Foundation Day which will be held tomorrow, December 18. The dinner during this event is sponsored by the PTA; consequently, meal tickets will be sold at P50 each, and certain committees were designated for the food preparation, cooking, and food service. The assignments are as follows: Food Preparation by parents from Demang, Ambasing, and Dagdag; Cooking by parents from Poblacion area; Food service will be done by students and parents from other barangays (northern, eastern, and outside Sagada); Clean-up will be done by members of the Garden Club on Saturday, December 19. If you haven't done so, please send your payment and indicate the number of people from your family who will be attending the occasion.

Service Learning: By the time this bulletin has been issued, the students will have returned from their various service learning sites. Last Monday, December 14, the Freshmen attended a morning workshop on first aid conducted by volunteer SEGA guides; the afternoon was spent doing clean-up of the areas around Lumiang and Sumaging caves. The following day, they hiked to the Pilao area adjacent to Lake Danum, where they will spend the night and do scouting activities. The sophomores hiked to Bangaan and will do community service for St. Matthew's parish in Bangaan. Other activities included socialization with the Bangaan SKEP and an overnight in Datacan Rainforest. As community service, both 3rd and 4th Year students went to Kayan to haul aggregates from the road to the top of the mountain which had collapsed during Typhoon Peping. The juniors then proceeded to Masla for academic research and socialization with students of Masla NHS, while the seniors spent the night in Panabungen. The following day, the group hiked to Tamboan to do service learning with the community and the school. 1st Year, 2nd Year, and 4th Year had a picnic lunch in Lake Danum on their way back to Sagada on Wednesday. Welcome Back!

Thursday morning (December 17) has been designated as a rest period. However, students are expected to come to school at 1:00 p.m. for rehearsals for the dap-ay competition in cultural songs and dances. Attendance will be taken, as this date is a school day. Seniors are scheduled to attend music rehearsals at 10:00 a.m. in

preparation for the Bangaan Concert scheduled at 6:00 p.m. The Bayan Ko participants will rehearse at 9:00 a.m. prior to music rehearsals.

FOUNDATION DAY/CORDILLERA DAY/CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS

Schedule of Activities

December 17, Thursday:

9:00 a.m.	Say-awit Practice
10:00 -12:00	3 rd & 4 th Year Music Rehearsals
5:00 p.m.	Travel to Bangaan, St. Matthew's Church
6:00 p.m.	Christmas Concert in St. Matthew's Church, free admission
7:00 p.m.	Dinner for participants
8:00-8:30 p.m.	Expected arrival in school

December 18, Friday

7:30 a.m.	School Mass (SMV)
8:30 a.m.	School Concert (SMV), parents are invited
10:00 a.m.	Quiz Bee on Cordillera and SMS History and Geography (Lunch on your own)
10:00–12:00	SMS Kindergarten Christmas Party and Lunch
1:00 – 4:00	Dap-ay Competitions in Cultural Presentations
4:00 – 6:00	Expected Arrival of Visiting Schools
6:00–7:00	Torchlight Parade from Daoangan to SMS, Lighting of Christmas Tree
7:00	Kindergarten Presentations followed by Dinner
8:00	Cultural Presentations by SMS Cultural Troupe, Tamboan National High, and Kalinga Academy Followed by community dancing
10:00	End of Celebrations

December 19, Saturday

Starting 7:30	Friendship Games with SMS, Tamboan NHS, and Kalinga Academy
6:00 p.m.	Social Interaction among the three schools

December 20, Sunday

8:30 a.m.	Community Mass (SMV)
10:00 a.m.	Departure of visiting schools

FINAL NOTES:

Students, please take note that school rules apply even during Christmas break. Enjoy the break and spend quality time with your family and friends. **REMEMBER, SCHOOL RESUMES ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 5.** We purposely scheduled school one day after the public schools resume classes (January 4) to allow for travel. We have barely one week and a half before 3rd Quarter Exams. **DO NOT PROCRASTINATE REGARDING YOUR ACADEMIC ASSIGNMENTS. MOST IMPORTANTLY, BE SAFE AND BE HAPPY!**

On behalf of the SMS family, we wish you Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!!

Dennis "Gomowad" Faustino