



Saint Thomas the Apostle School Announces: The Retirement of a Legend...

A Keeper and Defender of the Faith
 A True Historian
 A Master Teacher
 A Master Catechist
 A Family Man
 A Patriot
 A Civil War Reenactor
 A World War II Reenactor
 The First Ever Recipient of the
 Student Council Elizabeth Ann Seton Award
 A Collector
 A Director
 A Colleague
 A Friend
 One of the Good Guys



1978 (earliest picture available)



2007

Following much prayer and discernment over the last couple of years, Mr. Gilbert Keller has communicated his decision to retire at the conclusion of this year. After 39 years of continuous service to the Saint Thomas community, it will be difficult to say goodbye to a man who has truly devoted the better part of his life to our school. Beginning at St. Thomas in the fall of 1968, Mr. Keller has taught three generations of Saint Thomas junior high students to know and live the Catholic faith, to understand the roots of our religion in the scriptures, to value the rich lessons of history, to explore the past in search of its applications for the present, and perhaps most significantly, to live a life of faithful service to others. While Mr. Keller will be missed as an active member of our faculty, these lessons will not be soon forgotten by our school community. They will live on in his classroom, as these are the timeless ideals we will strive to uphold and pass on into the future.

Over the next two months, there is much to be expressed by way of our gratitude, much to reminisce, many laughs to be had, and many stories to tell. If you would like to share a memory, a story, or an expression of gratitude; please submit them:

- by mail to: Saint Thomas the Apostle School, 1429 Wilcox Park Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506,
 - or email to: dfaber@stthomasgr.org,
- or fax to: 616-458-4583.

We will feature a sampling of your thoughts in our last two editions of the Pieces Newsletter. The others will be put together and presented to Mr. Keller in the form of a keepsake. Please join me in creating a fitting tribute to this very special man.

Our community would like to celebrate with Mr. Keller, and bless him with a send off to be remembered. If you are interested in helping with this special event, please contact Sue Ysasi in the school office at 458-4228 ext. 300.

~ Dave Faber



ATTACHMENTS



- May Calendar/May Hot Lunch
- Spring Program Costume List
- Golf Outing Flyer
- Hot Lunch Order Form
- GRASP Flyer
- St. Thomas Booster Flower Sale
- Kent County February Fact Sheet
- Candy & Jean Sale Flyer

Anticipated Teachers and Classes for 07/08

Next year's anticipated* teaching assignments and class configurations are:

- P3 – Mrs. Tietema w/aide
- P4 – Mrs. Edgerton w/aide
- K – Miss Westphal w/aide
- 1 – Mrs. Lake w/1/2 time aide
- 2 – Mrs. Baxter
- 2 – Mrs. Michels
- 3 – TBD (see note from Ms. Haviland below)
- 3 – Mrs. Pieri
- 4 – Ms. Campbell
- 4/5 – Mrs. Petkus
- 5 – Mrs. Furtwangler
- 6 – New Teacher due to Mr. Keller's Retirement (see article on front page)
- 7 – Mr. Carr
- 7 – Mrs. Zoppa
- 8 – Mrs. Stegehuis

**Enrollment changes are possible. As a result, the above assignments are subject to change.*

The teacher request process has changed. In the past we found that parents were making requests simply because they felt they should. Please understand that teachers spend many hours creating class lists based on student needs, teaching styles, and social interactions. As a result, it is not necessary to make a request! If you have a **special reason** to request a teacher for your 2nd through 5th grade student(s), the teacher request process will be outlined in the May 2 Pieces.

A Note from Ms. Haviland

Dear Families

I have decided to cut back on the amount of time I teach next year. It is the time in life for me to transition into retirement by reducing my hours of working time. I have thoroughly enjoyed my classroom teaching career and have been so blessed to be here at St. Thomas. As this is a bittersweet decision, I will be around next year substitute teaching and helping the classroom teachers when I can, and I'll still see you at church. This way I will not miss you all so much. God bless. ~ *Monica Haviland*

7th & 8th Grade Spring Dance

Save the date – Friday, April 27th from 7:00-9:00 p.m. for the 7th & 8th Grade Spring Dance. There will be a DJ, dancing, munchies and lots of fun for all. Flyers with more information will be sent to 7th & 8th graders. Hope to see you all at the dance. ~ *Mrs. Aulbach*



SCHOOL DAY EXTENDED FOR THE 2007/2008 SCHOOL YEAR

Next year's Diocesan calendar requires 178 days of instruction at 6:15 minutes per day. When you factor in half days, this allows for 1,100 hours of instruction. Currently at St. Thomas we have 6:06 minutes of instruction at the elementary level and 6:13 minutes at the Junior High Level. In order to meet the state guideline for minimum instructional time, our Education Commission reached consensus that our school day will be extended. School will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:15 p.m. beginning with the 2007/2008 school year. ~ *Dave Faber*



Booster Flower Sale

St. Thomas Boosters is once again offering beautiful flower baskets for you to purchase just in time for Mother's Day! Order forms are attached. Call Helen Vrugink at 459-6910 if you have any questions.

Registration 2007/2008

The School 2007/2008 Registration deadline for current school families has passed. Registrations are being received on a first-come basis. Some classes are full, so do not delay your registration. Registrations to date that show we are at or near capacity in the following grades:

- P3
- P4AM – Closed
- P4PM – Closed
- Grade 1 – Closed
- Grade 8

If you have any questions regarding registration, please call Sue in the school office at 458-4228 x300.

Teacher Appreciation Week—Volunteers Needed

Teacher Appreciation Week is fast approaching - April 30 - May 4, 2007! We are in need of volunteers for the following:

- Shoppers to go out and purchase items off of the teacher's "favorites" list (ASAP)
- Helpers to put together bags of purchased items for the teachers
- Valet parkers to help park the cars for the teachers from 7-7:30 a.m. on Wed, May 2.

If you can help in any capacity, please contact Jennifer Clemens at 974-0015 or jmclemens8@comcast.net. Thank You!

Protecting God's Children Awareness Sessions

If you still need to attend Virtus training, (required for all school volunteers), please note the upcoming sessions:

St. Anthony of Padua (Grand Rapids)
Thursday, April 26, 2007 @ 6:00 PM

St. Jude Parish (Grand Rapids)
Wednesday, May 2, 2007 @ 6:30 PM

St. Sebastian Parish (Byron Center)
Wednesday, May, 9 2007 @ 6:30 PM

If you plan to attend one of these sessions, and have not already registered, please register online as follows:

Go to www.virtus.org

- Click "Registration"
- Click "Begin the Registration Process"
- Select Diocese of Grand Rapids as the organization.
- You will be required to enter a UserID and password (of your choice)
- Fill out registration form
- Choose a location

Spiritual Adoption

The April meeting for Junior High Students who have chosen to spiritually adopt a baby in danger of abortion, is Thursday, April 26th from 2:40-3:00 p.m. in the Ministry Center. Remember to bring your baby bottle with the prayer card attached. If you forget your bottle, please come. Your prayers are most important!! See you on the 26th!

~ Mrs. Donna Valente



Web 2.0 Tools

It is not new news that many K-3 students are seasoned internet users nor that many students are using Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, and other social networks to communicate with friends and family. Unfortunately, many students take too many risks when using these tools and families are not making good decisions on how to use these tools. Here are nine rules for safe and appropriate use of Web 2.0 tools.

1. Be picky when selecting online tools.
2. Choose a screen name that doesn't reveal personal information.
3. Leave your public profile blank.
4. Do not provide personal information in postings or in response to unsolicited messages.
5. Think twice before posting photos.
6. Postings on the internet are not private.
7. Once it's online, you can't take it back.
8. Remember that online "friends" are strangers.

When in doubt, talk with a trusted adult.

~ Maryly Skallos

Congratulations to:

Andrew and Anne Langlois
on the birth of

Jason Andrew Langlois

born on
Tuesday, March 13, 2007
5 pounds and 6 ounces



Proud sibling: Renee (P3)

Parent Offerings

One of the biggest challenges we face as Christian parents and educators is how we can help our children combat the many negative influences that our teenagers face in today's culture. To help give you some information and the opportunity for dialogue with other parents the CCHS administration along with the WE CARE Parent Organization has put together a speaker series to address some of the challenging issues that we face. The next presentation is a dynamic speaker asked to return after her presentation last year.

Presentation Title: The Truth about Adolescent Alcohol and Drug Abuse

April 25th at 7:00pm CCHS Cafeteria
Whitney Johnson
Director of Discovery Program
St. John's Home

Whitney Johnson and St. John's Home have gained a reputation as having one of the best adolescent alcohol and drug prevention and rehabilitation programs in Michigan. They will address signs of drug abuse and what parents can do to help their teens combat the peer pressure associated with underage use.

Summer Day Camp Opportunities

Catholic Central High School – Golf Camp

Interested in golf? This camp is for boys & girls entering 6th – 9th grade in 2007 and be held from July 9th to July 13th at Centennial Country Club. For further information, please contact Coach Kim Napieralski at 970-9987 or kimnapwal@sbcglobal.net or check for applications by the school entrance.

Grand Rapids Civic Theater has several different day camps available for interested students. Please check by the school entrance for further information or contact the Civic Theater at ph# 222-6653.

West Catholic High School is offering a **Fine Arts Camp** from June 18th to June 22nd for students entering 4th to 8th grades. Registration deadline is May 30th. For further information, please contact Lisa Nawrocki at 233-5939 or check for information at the school entrance.

Calvin College is once again holding its **Chem-Camps** for current 5th, 6th and 7th grade students. Session 1 is from June 18th – 22nd and Session 2 is from June 25th-29th. For further information please contact Jodi Cole at ph# 526-8801 or check for information at the school entrance.

Catholic Central Cheerleading Mini-Camp for 2007 will be held from June 12th- June 14th at the Catholic Central Gym. This camp is open for all girls from preschool to 8th grade. For further information, please contact Sue Hickey at ph# 534-2108 or cc.cheer@hotmail.com. Registration forms can be found at www.graceac.com.

MVS Middle School Math & Science Camps will run for 2 weeks. The cost will be \$75 for Math ; \$75 for Science (Michigan students) Visit their website for more information www.mivhs.org/camps, email camps@mivu.org, or call 800-393-6052.

Camp Sancta Maria, located in Gaylord Michigan, is a **Catholic summer camp** for boys and a retreat center for family, church and school groups. For more information please visit www.campsanctamaria.org or call (248) 822-8199.

GVSU Regional Math & Science Center is offering **Summer Science Adventure Day Camps**- Many opportunities for students entering grades 4-10. Camps run in the month's of June/July. For more information, please contact Kelly Heid at (616) 331-3031 or email heidke@gvsu.edu.

SPRING BREAK 2008

We realize that many of you plan ahead for the next spring break. We have received the tentative calendar for the 07-08 school year. Spring break will be April 7-11, as spring break is always the **first full week** of April.

GRASP

The Grand Rapids Public Schools is again making available their Academic Summer Program entitled GRASP. Attached is an enrollment form. All forms are due in the school office by May 2, 2007. If you would like more information, please call Judy or Marilyn at 819-2548.

~ Sue Ysasi

Catholic Central Registration

Catholic Central High School visited the 8th grade and distributed CCHS registration packets for the 2007/2008 school year. Registration conferences for incoming 9th graders will be held March 19th through April 27th. If you have any questions please call the Guidance Office at 223-5810.

Community Events

Grand Rapids Right to Life will hold their 28th Annual Bike & Hike for Life on Saturday, May 5, 2007 at Riverside Park. You can earn great prizes like Michigan Adventure or White Caps tickets or one of our grand prizes like a trip to Washington D.C. or a \$200 gift certificate to Great Wolf Lodge. Just gather pledges and join us for a great day of live music, free food and lots of fun. If you would like to participate please pick up a pledge sheet in the Welcome and Information Center or call 532-2300.

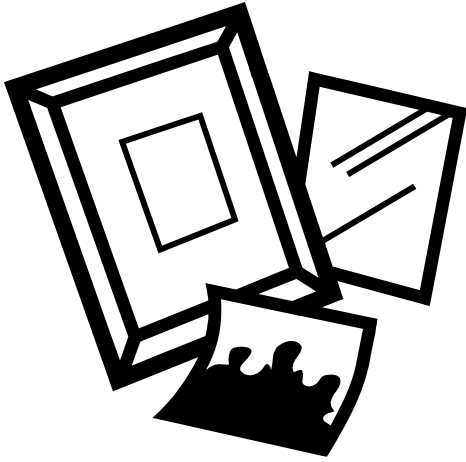
The Walker Recreation Department presents the 13th Annual Pick-n-Roll 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday, June 16th. Registration deadline for teams is June 5th. For more information, please pick up a form at the school entrance or call 791-6890.

We Celebrate Our Newest Authors



| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------|---|
| Lydia Dykema | My Bug Zig Zag | Lake | 1 |
| Anna Simonait | My Dog Swan | Lake | 1 |
| Claire DenBraber | The Sun and the Planets | Lake | 1 |
| Alayna Henry | The Rabbit That Had Wings | Baxter | 1 |
| Maddie Yuncker | Dad Surprises Us | Baxter | 1 |
| Jameson VanDokkemburg | The Robot Named Big Lips | Lake | 1 |
| Regina Faber | I Love My Teacher's Baby | Lake | 1 |
| Maddie Zimelis | My Unexpected Trip to the Rainforest | Pieri | 3 |
| Grace Pinter | The Surprise Party | Lake | 1 |
| Lizzie Murphy | Do I Have To? | Lake | 1 |
| Sarah Baxter | The Frogs | Lake | 1 |
| Adrien Yondo | Adrian and the Sparrows | Lake | 1 |
| Elizabeth Rott | Princess Julia | Haviland | 2 |
| Brooke Nicholson | All About My Dog's Puppies | Haviland | 2 |
| Tess Ens | The Obnoxious Pet | Haviland | 2 |
| Maggie Rott | My Dog Rainbow | Lake | 1 |
| Kristen Salinas | How to Get Cookies | Lake | 1 |

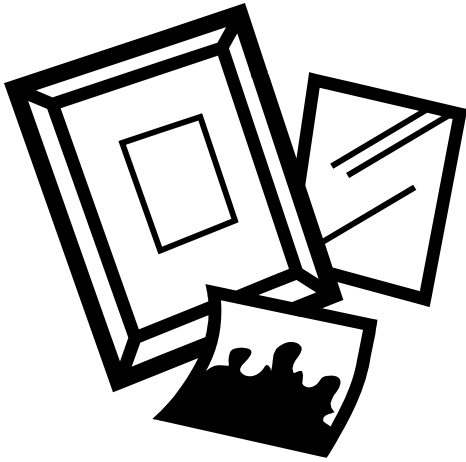
WE COMMIT OUR LIVES TO JESUS



Pictures have been removed for Internet Safety Purposes

FRONT ROW: Aubrey LaVoie, Doug Zeeff, Kassi Mirandette, Dane Wardrop, Sam Gibbons
BACK ROW: Patrick Hieshetter, Arthur Jones, Joe Becherer, Meaghan Race, Scott Dripchak

FRONT ROW: Olivia Strickland, Jim O'Neil, Andrew Hess, Ondrej Kovarik, Erin Mangan, and Cassidy Triestram
BACK ROW: Pablo Corcoran, Regina Faber, Ian Richards, Maya Zimelis, and Kate Lignell



Pictures have been removed for Internet Safety Purposes

FRONT ROW: Maggie Kane, Elizabeth Rott, Constance Stormzand, James Schueler, and Noah Fetterhoff
BACK ROW: Michael Jepsen, Thomas France, Anna Valente, and Dylan Sykes



FRONT ROW : Patrick Gibbons, Emma Fiorenzo, Matthew Schueler
MIDDLE ROW: Anna Bockheim, Timmy Lambert, Finn Perdue
BACK ROW: Joe Murphy, Claire Salinas, Mady Lambert, Kathleen O'Neil

Reminder—

View the Pieces, current Newsletters, the Hot Lunch menu, monthly calendars, print out forms and more at.....

www.stthomasgr.org