



# St. Sebastian Parish School ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



## Newsletter

Fall 2014

**Please Join Us!**  
at the St. Sebastian Parish  
School Alumni Mass  
8:15 am  
✠  
Thursday, October 30th

Alumni are invited immediately following mass to join us for coffee and donuts in ZHall. Tours will also be offered of the school.

### Have Your Kids Left the Nest?



Are you still getting their newsletter? Please send us their new address and email so we can add them to our mailing list. Please send to:  
alumni@stsebastian.org

### Our apologies

Recently we sent out email invitations to the alumni reunion. We apologize for those of you who received multiple emails, we tried a new feature of our database and it didn't cooperate that day. Sorry for the inconvenience.

## Memories of St. Sebastian

As St. Sebastian Parish School celebrates its 85th Anniversary, we thought it would be nice to take a stroll down memory lane with Pat and Bill Stiller. The Stillers both attended St. Sebastian Parish School, as did all six of their children, and three of their grandchildren have attended St. Sebastian or are attending now.

Bill graduated from St. Sebastian in 1944, and Pat graduated in 1948, after transferring to St. Sebastian in the 7th grade when her family moved from Cleveland to a new home on Dorchester Road. While Pat and Bill did not meet at St. Sebastian (they met later because Pat knew Bill's younger sister), they share many fond memories of our school. We've listed a few of them below:

### On the Teachers...

Pat's favorite teacher at St. Sebastian was Sister Cleophas. Bill's favorite was his first grade teacher Sister Dorothea. Bill said Sr. Dorothea actually came back to Akron for his 50th class reunion, and said she still remembered all her students! Bill recalls that "Sr. Dorothea liked red-headed kids ... there were 6 or 7 kids with red hair and she would put them all in the front of the class." Bill was one of those red-heads, along with Paul Leyden, Margaret Ann O'Neil Freer, Edward Flynn, and Al Fiala. By the time their children attended St. Sebastian in the 1970s, there were fewer nuns teaching, but the Stillers remember that the principal was always a nun.



*Bill and Pat as students at  
St. Sebastian Parish School*



**Mon-  
signor  
Zwisler...**  
Pat and  
Bill, who  
recently  
celebrated  
their 59th  
wedding  
anniver-  
sary, were  
married by  
Monsignor  
Zwisler in

1955 in the old, original church (now named Zwisler Hall). Monsignor Zwisler baptized Pat's grandfather and mother at St. Mary's. Both Pat and Bill remember Monsignor Zwisler as being very kind, but very strict. Bill says, "Many people only remember him as being strict. When we got married, Fr. Z at the rehearsal told us not to worry about anything, that he would tell us what to do... Father Z. was very involved in the St. Vincent de Paul Society. He always wanted to make sure his parishioners were taken care of."

### On Clean Floors & Uniforms...

Bill remembers that the nuns had the kids scrub the floors every Friday with very fine steel wool pads. She said the nuns would get the students involved by making them put the steel wool pads on the bottom of their feet and cleaning around their desk. "They were all wooden floors with no finish on them at that point," says Bill. "That's one of the reasons that from October 1 to May 1 you showed up in rubbers, over your shoes, rain or shine – or you didn't come to school. You took them off at the door and carried them to the back. They were strict or you went home. That's the way it was."

Pat was not fond of her uniform: "It was absolutely horrible. The cuffs buttoned on, and were navy blue and there was a button on collar you could take off and wash every few  
*con't on back page*

Send us your Email Address  
and Win a Commemorative Brick!

Send us your email address and in return you will be entered into a drawing to win a Commemorative Brick. Send your name, alumni year, and email address to [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org) by December 1, 2014 to enter.

If you are interested in purchasing a brick for yourself or as a gift, please visit:

<http://foundation.stsebastian.org/memorial-tribute-gifts/commemorative-bricks.html>



## Teacher, Donna Russo

The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation was recently informed that **Mrs. Donna Russo** passed away May 21, 2014. Mrs. Russo, educated and inspired young minds for many years here at St. Sebastian Parish School.

A scholarship has been established in her memory by an anonymous donor. *The Donna Russo and Family Memorial Scholarship* was established to provide one St. Sebastian Parish School student in grade K-7 with one year of tuition at the current parishioner rate.

Additionally, this scholarship serves to celebrate her beloved daughters, **Peggy Russo McCellan** class of 1982, **Laura Russo Pietenpol** class of 1984, **Jenny Russo Wilson** class of 1982, and **Laniece Russo** class of 2005.

This scholarship was started with an anonymous donation and we are so blessed to have Mrs. Russo memorialized in such a loving way. If you or your family would like to help support this scholarship, please send your donation to:

St. Sebastian Parish Foundation  
attn: Russo Scholarship  
476 Mull Avenue  
Akron, OH 44320

## Melane Francis Retires...Almost

Ms. Melane Francis has decided to retire from teaching full time this year, but fortunately for the students of St. Sebastian Parish School, she will now be a Reading Specialist and will continue to direct PSR. Ms. Francis spent most of her time teaching 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade at St. Sebastian and spent some time teaching at a behavioral residential treatment center for troubled high school teens. What she likes best about teaching is seeing the wonder and excitement of young students when they realize they have learned a concept or skill.

Ms. Francis stated she "liked teaching 1st grade best because the growth from the beginning to the end of the year is so noticeable. I have always hoped that my students would love reading as much as I do." Ms. Francis would like everyone to know that "I have received many cards and letters from some of my former students and I appreciate and thank them for their kind words."







*Years of Catholic Education*

## St. Sebastian Parish School Celebrates its Diamond Anniversary

For the past four years at the September Spectacular, we have honored people who have made a positive impact in our community and beyond. In light of our celebration of St. Sebastian Parish School's 85th Anniversary, we wish to honor all of our alumni who have made service to others central to their lives. This commitment to service is represented in this year's honorees: St. Sebastian alumni Peggy Baumgardner Contrera and Captain Tom Mascolo, who have lived extraordinary lives of service to others and to our country.

### Margaret Baumgardner Contrera '72

Peggy Baumgardner Contrera is a native of Akron, Ohio and proud alumna of the class of 1972 from St. Sebastian Parish School. She graduated from Our Lady of the Elms, received her nursing degree from OSU then received her master's in Anesthesia from Case Western Reserve.



Peg's family has a deep connection with this parish community, where her grandparents, Aloysius and Nellie Baumgardner, were founding members of St. Sebastian Parish. Her father, Dr. H. Thomas Baumgardner, was an active parishioner of St. Sebastian and a cardiologist who was in fact Msgr. Zwisler's physician! Her mother, Mary Rita, was a pediatric nurse practitioner, parishioner and active volunteer for 50 years. Peg and her six siblings are all proud St. Sebastian Parish School Alumni. In 1983, Peg married Ken Contrera and they have four wonderful children whom were each blessed to receive a St. Sebastian education, Tom '00, Kevin '03, Jessica '06, and Keith '12.

Peg also leads a very busy and rewarding career as a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) in the Department of Cardiothoracic and Vascular Anesthesia, Cleveland Clinic where she provides anesthesia for heart, lung and vascular surgeries. She is a professor with the Academic and Clinical Faculty in the Masters of Nursing Program at CWRU and Cleveland Clinic.

When Peg is not wearing her family hat or her surgical scrubs, she dons her service cap. She has been an active Catechist for St. Sebastian Children's Liturgy for more than 20 years and Pre-Cana for 5 years, has been an adult volunteer and team leaders with the Jus-

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### Captain Thomas Mascolo '73



Captain Thomas Mascolo, a native of Akron, Ohio, is an alumnus of St. Sebastian Parish School from the class of 1973. He earned a degree in aerospace engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy and a master's degree in aerospace engineering at the University of Maryland. Captain Mascolo

is a graduate of the French test pilot school and is a member of the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. Tom also completed a fellowship at Oxford University's Saint Antony's College in the United Kingdom.

Captain Mascolo retired from the U.S. Navy in 2012 after a distinguished career. He was an operational carrier pilot and test pilot with assignments around the globe flying primarily the A-6 Intruder, EA-6B Prowler and the F-18 Hornet. He was twice recognized with outstanding leadership awards. He has flown combat missions over Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia and many other hot spots. He served as commanding officer of a combat squadron and of Naval Station Everett. As a test pilot, he served both at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland and at Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake, California.

Captain Mascolo has logged over 4,100 hours in more than 40 aircraft. He has over 1,000 carrier arrested landings on 13 different carriers in five different aircraft. He has been awarded the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal and the Strike Flight Air Medal as well as many campaign and unit awards.

Captain Mascolo's last military assignment was at China Lake, California, where he led over 1,000 sci-

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*Contrera (con't)*

tice Akron Ministry at Hoban High for more than 10 years, and Odyssey of the Mind and Science Olympiad Coach at St. Sebastian and Hoban, has served 2 terms on the Parish Sanctuary Society Board, has volunteered many terms as parent volunteer for classrooms, sports teams, drama club, September Spectacular and so much more here at St. Sebastian Parish.

Peg stated that “none of the above would be possible without the support and encouragement of the faculty and staff at St. Sebastian School as well as our Parish Family. I feel so blessed to be part of this amazing community.” This is certainly a woman who lives her life in service to others!

*Mascolo (con't)*

entists and engineers in the Weapons and Energetics Department. After retiring from the Navy, Tom took a job with Boeing as the Contractor Test Flight Director for the P-8A Poseidon program, where he leads an integrated test team of 250 Boeing, government, military and contractor employees.

Tom is married to the former Heather Carlton, also of Akron. They live in Leonardtown, Maryland with their children Robert and Josephine. St. Sebastian is grateful for all that Captain Mascolo has given in service to our country, and we are proud to call him one of our own!

## Help Us Find Our Missing Alumni

If you know any of the alumni below, please send us their contact information by email at [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org) or call 330.836.2233 x119.

**Thank you for your help!**

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>1962</b><br>Valerie Quinlan McCullough  | <b>1981</b><br>Paul Howard         |
| <b>1963</b><br>James Siegerth              | <b>1993</b><br>Shellie Smith       |
| <b>1971</b><br>Paula Pritchard Thoennissen | <b>1999</b><br>Amanda Kirchenbauer |
| <b>1980</b><br>Trudy Costas Bachmann       | <b>2000</b><br>Christina Walker    |

We are looking for “*Alumni Updates*”

Please let us know about marriages, births, deaths, name changes, new addresses and other events in your life. Please use the contact form online or email us your updates at:

[alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org)

## *We Will Remember*

The Alumni Association extends sincere sympathy to the families and friends of those alumni who have passed. If you learn of the passing of a St. Sebastian Alumni, please contact us by phone at 330.836.2233 x119 or by email at [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org).

✠ Please keep these friends in your prayers ✠

- Mary Jo Zeno ‘31, August 7, 2014
- Donald Rauckhorst, Sr. ‘32, December 28, 2013
- Jane Homeier Cook ‘40, July 11, 2013
- Bruce Raff ‘41, June 4, 2014
- Paul J. Leyden, ‘44, August 14, 2014
- David J. Towell, ‘46, August 12, 2014
- Thomas J. Hillery, ‘47, August 29, 2014
- Agnes Walter, ‘47, August 30, 2014
- Joseph Chase ‘55, May 14, 2014
- Charles J. Smith ‘55, April 12, 2014
- Patricia Seifried Pfander ‘56, July 11, 2014

## New Classroom Interior Doors

This summer the school was a busy place! While there were no students on campus, it was filled with workers in every part of the school. A new roof went on the main school building, the downstairs boys' bathroom was remodeled, and all the classroom interiors doors were replaced. Each door and frame was replaced with a security door that has minimal glass. Each door now closes and locks from the inside, keeping the students and faculty safer in a lockdown situation. The faculty and parents both have commented how the new doors make the school look more modern. When you attend the 4th annual reunion on November 1, take a peak in the school (see invite on back page).



A grant from the Rooted in Faith Campaign was secured in the spring to start the work. The Foundation secured generous grants from The **Lehner Family Foundation**, the **W. Paul Mills and Thora J. Mills Memorial Foundation**, and the **Lloyd L. & Louise K. Smith Foundation** to complete the work. Thank you to those generous Foundations and faithful parishioners who gave to the Rooted in Faith Campaign.



## We Have Nearly Reached Our Goal!

The *St. Sebastian Alumni Scholarship Endowment* balance is currently **\$5,524**. Thank You! The scholarship will be endowed when the amount reaches \$7,500 at which time the distribution of funds will begin.

To date we have had 79 alumni donate to this endowment. Donations have ranged from \$10 from a high school student to \$1,000 from a husband and wife who graduated from St. Sebastian Parish School. *All gifts, no matter the size, are appreciated!* Alumni from 43 different class years have given. Please consider a gift to this worthy endowment no matter the amount.

Again, **thank you** to all alumni who recently gave to the Alumni Scholarship Endowment! Below is everyone who gave June - August 2014.

1944 Marie Karg Graham  
1947 Michael Stiller  
1952 Julie Censky Randall  
1955 Ann Loftus \*  
1958 Nancy Rothermel Fagan  
1973 Christine Beringer Renner

*\*Our apologies for the omission of Ann Loftus in the last newsletter.*

If you would like to contribute to the Alumni Scholarship Endowment, please send your tax deductible gift to:

*St. Sebastian Parish Foundation*  
Alumni Association  
476 Mull Avenue  
Akron, OH 44320

## You are needed to be a Class Contact!

It does not take much time and we supply the contact information. It's a great way to keep in touch with all your classmates. If you are interested please email: [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org)

Don't know your class contact? Look online:  
<http://foundation.stsebastian.org/alumni/classContact.html>





ST. SEBASTIAN PARISH SCHOOL  
**4<sup>TH</sup> ALL CLASS ALUMNI REUNION**  
Saturday, November 1, 2014

**Zwisler Hall • 5:30 pm**  
immediately following the 4:30 pm Mass

Please come and celebrate our 85th Anniversary with your fellow Alumni. There is no cost for the dinner this year as the event is sponsored in full by the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation.

Please **RSVP by October 22**  
with your name and number attending to:  
**alumni@stsebastian.org**

**330.836.2233 x119**

so we may give the caterer a head count



### Find us on LinkedIn

Please search LinkedIn for the new St. Sebastian Alumni LinkedIn group.

## High School Freshman! Welcome to the Alumni Association!

By being a graduate of St. Sebastian Parish School, you are automatically a member. You are joining a group of over 5,000 proud alumni.

Please keep in contact with us! Email us anytime at [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org) and let us know how you are doing, what wonderful accomplishments you have achieved, awards you have earned, volunteer projects you have helped with, and anything else you would like to share with us.



*The newest alumni: 8th Grade Graduating Class of 2014*

### Stiller (con't)

days... we had to wear stockings, not knee hose, regular stockings. The uniforms were heavy, ugly, and long-sleeved." Bill didn't remember having to wear anything specific uniform. He wore nickers, but not everyone wore them. He didn't remember wearing long pants until the 8th grade.

#### On Marching, Walking and Skating...

The Stillers recall that all the students marched out of school, in lines, in the afternoon to the song on the record player with a type of horn on it. Bill says, "They would crank it to play it. We had to march all the way to the sidewalk."

The Stillers recall that everyone walked to school and home from school "You just walked," explains Pat, "Unless it was pouring rain, then your mother might take you to school."

In the winter the Stillers said they would gobble down their lunch and take their skates and head over to Forest Lodge to go ice skating, and then they would skate again after school. Pat and Bill's children continued that tradition by ice skating at Forest Lodge.

#### On the Boys Choir ...

Bill was in the Boys Choir. He remembers having to wear a big, white, starched collar with a large black bow. Bill says "On Christmas at midnight we would start singing from a second story window (later the principal's office) and we would march down through the school and into the church, then to the end of the church and back to the choir loft. We would sing the Mass in the choir loft. The songs were sung in Latin." Bill loved singing the Midnight Mass since the choir members were the only kids allowed to attend that Mass because the church was not large enough to hold everyone who wanted to come.

*Do you have memories you would like to share? Please send them to [alumni@stsebastian.org](mailto:alumni@stsebastian.org) or mail them to St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, 476 Mull Avenue, Akron, OH 44320. We will print as many of them as we can.*