



The HeartBeat

A Newsletter for Alumni & Friends of St. John Eudes School

Visit us at www.sjeschool.net



The Gaines Family (from SJE School) leads the Procession of Flags after mass in the church to the Entertainment Tent as part of last year's carnival Multi-Cultural Celebration (which appropriately coincided with Pentecost). This year's carnival will also include the celebration which will bring representatives of numerous cultural heritages together to celebrate the wonderful ethnic diversity in our parish. The Multi-Cultural Celebration will begin with the 11:00 am mass on May 22, to be officiated by Bishop Salazar.

It's Almost Carnival Time . . .

and all our alumni & friends are invited to the SJE Summer Carnival on May 20 thru 22 that will include an incredible Grand Prize Drawing, fantastic food & goodies, the Multi-Cultural Celebration, a fabulous Silent Auction, top-notch entertainment, a great Beer & Margarita garden, along with the most exciting carnival games & rides ever!

The carnival is being co-chaired by school parents Ana Ure and Fred Perez who guarantee that this will be a super event with something for everyone. Come and join us for this wonderful celebration of the spirit of our school and parish. Admission is free! So mark your calendar now and make sure not to miss this great event!

To find out more, visit the carnival website at www.sjecarnival.org.

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Highlights:

- *Fun Rides to Give This Year's Carnival a Special Spin*
- *SJE Volunteer Tutors Teach Lessons by Heart; Guide Students on Path to Learning*
- *Msgr. Nugent Readies for Retirement With Parish Gala Party; Eudists to Assume Guidance of School & Parish*
- *SJE Chess Champions Onboard to Play Game of Kings*
- *SJE Alumni Honor Academic Heritage with Honors at Chaminade*
- *Open House Highlights Catholic Schools Week; Parish Generous in Contributions to Endowment, Annual Fund*
- *Parish & School Bid Farewell to Pioneer Parent; We Will Miss You, Warren Lien*
- *PTSO Puts on Mardi Gras Party; Good Times Roll to New Level & Off Campus*
- *Spring Sports Blossom with Crop of Dedicated Athletes Rooted in Tradition of Competition*

Guiding the Way by Heart

SJE Volunteer Tutors Map a Path to Success

Stop. Think. Remember the last time you were lost? I mean really lost, with no satellite navigation or "map quest" to guide you? School is like that for some kids: the class and homework assignments are filled with frustration and wrong turns. When you were lost, how did you find your way? Perhaps a friendly person gave you directions – what a relief! A good tutor is like that – and more. "The kids needed help." "She was afraid to ask a question." "He hated school." "She

lacked confidence." These are comments that express the reasons for the existence of the tutoring program at St. John Eudes School. But it wouldn't exist at all if parishioner John Chady hadn't stopped by the school office after mass one morning in 1995.

Looking for something to do after retiring from Lockheed in 1991, he offered assistance to then principal, Sr. Rosemary Bochniarz. Chady says, "Coming from a family of teachers, I felt drawn to the classroom." His first assignment was a fifth grade transfer student who struggled with third grade math skills. He remembers, "With confidence building, she soon caught up with the class. This success flamed my enthusiasm for tutoring."

Chady soon spread his enthusiasm out, recruiting more volunteers. He signed up the

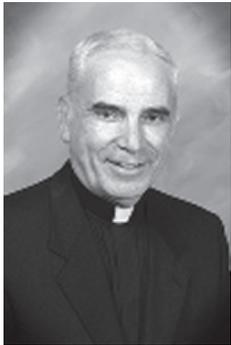
We appreciate everyone who donated to the school collection at mass during Catholic Schools Week. Nearly \$4,000 was received to help fund the Endowment and support the School Annual Fund. Our students thank you for your support!

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Focus on the Faculty: Msgr. Peter Nugent

We Thank You for Blessing Us With Your Unique Gifts and Loving Guidance . . .

“My first day here (at St. John Eudes) the thing that struck me the most was the friendliness of the people,” recalls Msgr.



Peter Nugent. “It’s a remarkable quality . . . a sign of God, of joy and love.” He continues, “We need to appreciate that and keep it alive.” Our calm and steady pastor finds it highly appropriate, that the patron of the parish and school, St. John Eudes, was dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Msgr. Nugent’s call to the priesthood came early, in second or third grade, up in the town of Moncton, New Brunswick, Canada, on the Atlantic side, where he grew up the middle child of seven, in a close knit family. Perhaps a clue that he would dedicate his life to Christ and find his way to Chatsworth and SJE is the motto of his birthplace: *Resurgo* – Latin for *I rise again*. Msgr. Nugent’s earliest model and inspiration for his vocation was the “admirable” pastor, Fr. Roy MacDonald.

At age thirteen, the family came to the United States, first to East Los Angeles and St. Alphonsus Parish, and then to Montebello. Msgr. Nugent remembers, “We had to move, as the house was too small. I really can’t figure how we all fit in it, where we all slept.” The move happened while he was attending High School Preparatory Seminary at 3rd and La Brea in Los Angeles, which complicated his life with a long commute. Fortunately, this

became less of a problem when a parishioner who worked nearby offered to drive him to school.

Msgr. Nugent was ordained as a priest of the Archdiocese in 1962 at St. John’s Seminary, Camarillo. He had become an adept Spanish speaker which he put to use as he took up a residence in the familiarity of St. Alphonsus, with the company of his sister who was a teacher at the school. He continued with his education, earning a Bachelor’s Degree in Music at Mount St. Mary and a Master’s in Music at USC. This allowed him the opportunity to return to St. John’s Seminary as a music teacher for the next fourteen years, prior to his first assignment as pastor in 1981 at St. John the Baptist Parish, Baldwin Park.

Msgr. Nugent recalls that glints of our parish became evident to him back then, “When Msgr. (Philip) Grill (SJE founding pastor) came and presented the “Renew” program. I got a real feeling of the spirit at work over here.” During his nine years at St. John the Baptist, Fr. Nugent helped found the East Valleys Organization, a community action group working to aid the poor in the San Gabriel area. And then he went “country” moving to Santa Clara Parish in Oxnard for the next eleven years. Somewhere during that time, he was named a Monsignor. “It’s an honor, of course,” he shares, “but it is not a date that sticks, not like the day of ordination.”

Back in 2000, as he prepared to find a new assignment, he was looking to “step up the pace” from rural Oxnard, and also leave behind the long drives to meetings. He was ready to move – to the Valley! – and



SJE students of all ages take part in “Chess Champions” - an after school enrichment program which teaches the fine game of chess, along with analytical thinking and strategy development.

continue on with God’s plan for him. He put in his application, already aware of the strong community spirit at SJE. “The response of the parish to the huge impact of the (1994 Northridge) earthquake. The community pulls together, gets tight,” he continues, “But I knew that the (parishioners) were involved and respond to challenges.” Indeed, “We Will Rise Again” was the sign outside the white tent that served as church for two years during the building pledge drive and reconstruction.

Eleven years certainly flies by. We can all attest to that in remembering the time that Msgr. Nugent has spent gently shepherding our parish and school. In July, his very active priestly life will curve into the road of retirement, but plans abound, starting with a trip to the Congo for Deacon Albert’s ordination. Other places Msgr. Nugent hopes to visit in the coming years include New Zealand, Australia and Eastern Europe. The *Congregation of Jesus and Mary* (Eudists) will be administering St. John Eudes Parish when Msgr. Nugent retires and when the new pastor arrives, Msgr. Nugent will be, “helping out in

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If you’re an alumni you know that if they’re playing softball and volleyball . . . it must be spring! Spring sports is in a league of its own at St. John Eudes. Left - The Girl’s “A” Softball Team takes its turn at bat during a league game. With the season just starting, the girls are full of hope and enthusiasm as they look forward to a winning year. Right - The Boy’s “A” Volleyball Team plays to win as they face tough competition from neighboring schools. But with a spike in spirit, which they hope will carry them through the season, they are confident they will play their best and do well representing the school.





In a Lighter Vein . . .

Father O'Malley answers the phone:

"Hello, is this Father O'Malley?"

"It is."

"This is the IRS. Can you help us?"

"I'll try."

"Do you know a Ted Houlihan?"

"I do."

"Is he a member of your parish?"

"He is."

"Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?"

"He will."

*Have you remembered to make your tax deductible donation to help the worthy cause of providing a quality Catholic education to deserving children? Your donation to the **SJE School Annual Fund, Adopt-A-Student Program, Endowment, or other general or specific gifts** is greatly appreciated. To donate please contact the School Office (818) 341-1451 or visit our website at www.sjeschool.net. Thank you!*

Right - (left to right) Miklos Zoller, Andrew Mezher, Jillian Olivas, and Kristina Pollock (along with Bianca Derrick, not pictured) were inducted into the National Honor Society this year as seniors at Chaminade College Preparatory. All started together in Kindergarten at St. John Eudes School, and this year they are graduating together with high honors.

Bottom Left - Mrs. Danowitz poses with Robert Davi, school parent, during SJE School Open House last January. They both originally hail from New York but appreciate and enjoy the Chatsworth weather. And while it admittedly drizzled a little bit during Open House, folks back east were shoveling snow but most of us out here were shoveling California sunshine!



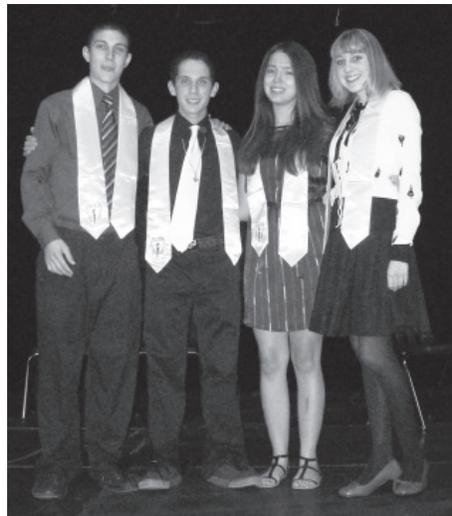
Bottom Right

- An SJE student proudly explains her work during the Open House which was held during National Catholic Schools Week. All classrooms were open to welcome visitors and friends, and to display student work.



Nadine Michail ('01) attended Chaminade Middle School and then Louisville High School. At LVH she was active on the swimming and polo teams. She graduated high school in 2005 and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Nutrition from Kaplan University. She is currently obtaining a Master's Degree in Oriental Medicine, while working in an alternative medicine doctor's office.

Shaun Beardsley ('06) attended Lawrence Middle School and went to Santa Susana High School, which is a magnet school for technology and performing arts. He is specializing in video technology. He will be graduating in 2011 and plans to attend California State University, Northridge. Shaun intends to enroll as a Philosophy major. As an avid snowboarder, he has developed a deep appreciation of the winter season with snow in the mountains.



In Memoriam - Warren Lien

Warren Lien, a founding parishioner of St. John Eudes Church, died unexpectedly on Monday, Mar. 14. A memorial Rosary and a funeral Mass (concelebrated by Msgr. Nugent, Msgr. McNamara, and Fr. McClean) were held for Mr. Lien in the church filled with his family and many friends.



Warren Lien raises 8 fingers to indicate the number of times he hiked El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. Mr. Lien's optimism and hard work was a great blessing to St. John Eudes.

Mr. Lien was one of the most active and well known parishioners of St. John Eudes Church, being involved with the parish since its founding in 1963. He was active as a Eucharistic Minister, and was a member of the Facility Committee, the Parish Finance Council, and the Parish Planning Committee (through which he was instrumental in the design and building of Grill Hall and the Parish Plaza, as well as the rebuilding of the church after the Northridge Earthquake).

He was a strong supporter of Catholic education and was one of the original fathers who helped unload the desks for our school when it opened in 1966. And, although his children and grandchildren have long since graduated from St. John Eudes School, he was actively involved in the tutoring program and gave much of his time helping in the education of our school children. He will be greatly missed by all those whose lives he touched in his service to our church.

The family requests that you remember Mr. Lien by making a donation to the **St. John Eudes Parish Building Fund** - a project which he heartily supported. Contributions may be made by clicking on the **Memorial Donation** link on the left side menu on the parish homepage at www.stjohneudes.org.

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Msgr. Peter Nugent
Pastor

Mrs. Barbara Danowitz
Principal

**A Community of Faith
is a community of learners
who recognize and nourish
God-given gifts.**



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A publication of the
St. John Eudes School
Development Office

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Msgr. Nugent

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whatever way I can. I don't want to interfere, but will offer transitional advice." He sees a dynamic in the assignment of a pastor from the Eudists to our parish, the only one in the U.S. with the patronage of St. John Eudes. "The parish is a territory, but God calls us all, we take everybody," Msgr. Nugent advises. "We each think in a different perspective; people have many different gifts." His balanced philosophy, "accept who people are, but stick to principals" are directly attributed to his upbringing. "My father was tolerant, and my mother was strict," says Msgr. Nugent, "You have to be both."

Early in his tenure, Msgr. Nugent was heard to espouse the virtue of moving forward together as a parish, regardless, but yet respectful, of the personal view of each individual. "It is wise," says Msgr. "to know what you have . . . and make room."

SJE Volunteer Tutors

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"cornerstone" of the program, Bob and Florence Guest, while on a parish sponsored cruise in 1996. "John mentioned tutoring and we said 'Yes'," the Guests recall. Presently there are twenty eight tutors on the list. Volunteers join through personal invitation from Chady or in answer to a parish bulletin announcement. Homemaker Jeannie Piekunka was motivated when she saw the request for volunteers, "I thought to myself 'I could do that' and . . . the rest is history!" Chady estimates that 375 students have been assisted by 240 tutors in the fifteen years since the program began. And he's always on the lookout for more tutors. He believes that the program's success is found in the real relationship built between tutor, student and parent. The teacher may recommend a student, or a parent may request help for their child, but once Chady assigns a tutor, the program runs autonomously. Each volunteer meets with their charge one day per week for about an hour after school; two or more tutor-student pairs work simultaneously in a classroom. They freely give their gifts of time and talent in math, reading and composition. One notable recipient of these gifts is Nadia Medina, 2006 SJE graduate. Medina entered the tutor program in sixth grade with



John Chady, foreground, helps students with their math, while other tutors help with other subjects.

math and English skills that Chady bluntly calls "a basket case". Through the next three years she was tutored by Chady and Bob Guest in math, and by Merlyn Schak in English, writing and composition. She went on to attend Alemany High School, graduating with honors, and is on course to be the first in her family to earn a degree.

Medina shares, "The tutoring program at SJE helped me so much! I was able to gain a good relationship with each one of the tutors I had and they would always motivate me to keep on trying and not give up. I am currently attending UC Riverside with a full ride scholarship, which is thanks to the tutors that devoted their time into helping me develop new skills for the future. I will always be thankful."

Tutors receive no compensation but each spring they are invited guests at a volunteer appreciation breakfast. Perhaps the most appreciative fan of the program, and their primary promoter, is SJE principal Barbara Danowitz, who tells everyone she meets about the group. Chady shares, "Mrs. Danowitz likes to brag on us," he continues with a grin, "being the only school that has such a tutor program." Chady has confidence in the self sustaining nature of the program with willing volunteers. How long will this go on? In the words of Bob and Flo Guest: "As long as God lets us."

Chady's own part is simple: he keeps the volunteer roster updated and facilitates the first meeting between tutor and student. That meeting must be interesting. Lost student, not wanting to admit being lost, meets tutor who holds the map and key. Holy Spirit guides, grace flows. The lost are found, the blind can see.



Mrs. Danowitz celebrated Mardi Gras with SJE teachers, families, friends, and alumni at the annual PTSO Spring Fundraiser which was held this year for the first time off campus at the Warner Center Marriott. The event raised \$35,000 to help the school.

Thank you, Monsignor Peter, for blessing us with your unique gifts and loving guidance. May God bless you as you move forward in His plan. And May God bless our parish and school as we make room for His plan.

The parish will be celebrating Msgr. Nugent's retirement, birthday and 49th Jubilee at a Gala Dinner at the Odyssey Restaurant on April 30. Visit the school website for more information.