

ALUMNI ARROW

NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2022

LETTERS FROM THE FORGOTTEN CABINET

Since Fr. John Valencheck arrived as pastor of St. Sebastian in 2008, there has been a very large, very old, steel filing cabinet in the basement of the rectory that could not be opened. He thought the key might turn up one day, but one never appeared. So, in September of 2021, Fr. Valencheck decided to stop waiting and asked the parish maintenance workers to drill open the lock.

What he found were letters and documents dating back to the start of the parish in 1928, including tax documents, notes from parishioners, correspondence from the diocese, letters from parishioners in the armed services, and even essays from altar boys. Fr. Valencheck has been writing about what he has found in the “Forgotten Cabinet” in his weekly “Angelus Letter” to parishioners. Below are excerpts from letter writers serving in the military who also happen to be alumni.



Ralph Bredhold* (Class of 1935)

JEFFERSON BARRACKS 22 March 1943 Missouri

“Dear Father, I am offering an apology right here for my failure to write before this but I hope the lack of sufficient time to do so is a valid excuse. I have completed my basic training and now have a little more free time; they have kept us on the move constantly for the past month, all I have done during this time is eat, sleep and march. Well, Father, time is getting short this evening (lights must be out at 9PM) and we must still scrub the floor of this hut (we sleep in hutments, 8 men to a hut) so I will have to mark time but you can rest assured that you will hear from me again. Till then, Your former altar boy,
Ralph Bredhold.”

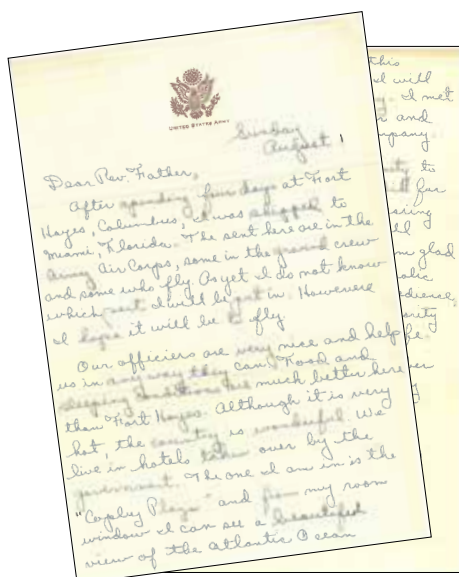
“I am glad that I was able to attend a Catholic School because I was taught obedience, promptness and respect for authority all of which are necessary in Army life.” - Ed Gemind '39

Ed Gemind* (Class of 1939)

Sunday, August 1 [1943].

“Dear Rev. Father, After spending four days at Fort Hayes, Columbus, I was shipped to Miami, Florida. Those sent here are in the Army Air Corps, some in the ground crew and some who fly. As yet I do not know which part I will be put in. However, I hope it will be to fly. ... Food and sleeping conditions are much better here than Fort Hayes ... we live in hotels taken over by the government. The one I am in is the ‘Copley Plaza’ and from my room window, I can see a beautiful view of the Atlantic Ocean. I was able to attend Mass this morning though I doubt if I will get to make the First Friday. I met a nephew of Father Laubacher and have found him very good company. ... I want to take this opportunity to thank you for everything you did for me. Your letter, medal, and blessing were all appreciated and I will always remember you for it. (continued inside)

* deceased



ALUMNI UPDATES

MORE FROM THE FORGOTTEN CABINET: One of the files in “The Forgotten Cabinet” (see page 1 story) was labeled “Parishioners in the Armed Forces.” Many of these files held letters from times of war, and they contain requests for baptismal records for weddings taking place wherever a soldier was stationed, notes from parents giving the addresses of their sons to whom they hoped Fr. Zwisler (not yet a Monsignor) would write a note, and a few letters sent to Fr. Zwisler from troops serving abroad. Fr. Valencheck notes that he found a recurring theme that our parishioners’ strong faith helped them face the difficult trials they encountered. Here are some letters written by alumni in the armed service:

CLASS OF 1937

George Metzger* sent a letter on paper labeled “USO, California” that was dated July 3, 1943. It reads:

“Dear Father Zwisler,

As you probably know, I am in ‘Sunny California.’ Well, Father, I guess I can truthfully say that I like the army, but it would be so much nicer if I were near home. But when this war comes to an end I believe I will appreciate home and civilian life more than I did before I was inducted. I have been going to Mass and Communion as often as possible as I am coming to realize more and more their importance. Sincerely yours, George Metzger.”

Send us your Alumni Updates!

We love to hear from our alumni! Please drop us a line and let us know what you are doing. Email us at alumni@stsebastian.org or use the online form at alumni.stsebastian.org/contact.

CLASS OF 1939

Dave Kline* wrote his letter to Fr. Zwisler from San Diego, CA dated January 10, 1944. It reads,

“Dear Reverend,

I heard from Mother that you were asking about us boys so I thought I had better write and let you know personally what I am doing ... I have only seen one boy from our parish since I have been out here and that was Richard Brienner, I think that is the correct spelling of his name. I would like to know how Fathers Swartz and Flynn are. I only had the pleasure of meeting Father Flynn once and that was when we played baseball together at the last parish picnic. Naturally we won of course. I would also like to know how my sister Mary is coming along in school ... I only have three more weeks here and then I will be assigned to my ship. I may get home and I may not so, I want to surprise Mother if I do get home so please keep my secret? I remain, as ever, just one of your old school pupils and very proud of it. Dave Kline.”

CLASS OF 1944

Bob Conway sent his letter to Fr. Zwisler on letterhead of the U.S. Marines, dated November 12, 1951. Here are some excerpts:

“Dear Father,

I thought I would just drop you a line to tell you a little about this place. The training here is tough but we are well cared for as far as food, medical care and religious services are concerned ... One day last week we had a steak that covered almost our whole tray. That was the best tasting steak I have ever eaten ... There is one chaplain for every recruit training battalion. So, I still attend six o’clock Mass on Sunday. We are able to attend confession any day of the week so that removes a problem. We hit the sack at ten o’clock on Saturday so fasting is easy. In fact, Father, I think here in the Marine Corp, morals seem higher than in real life. Of course, we have twenty-five Catholics and about forty good Methodists ... The sergeant hasn’t been to Church for five years, the last time was when he nearly stopped a Japanese bullet, (so) he thought he had better get on his knees. Even though he doesn’t go himself, he doesn’t hinder us in any way from fulfilling our duties ... Well, Father, it is time for lights out. Say hello to Father Tully and O’Brien and have them say a pray for me. I will probably need it. Yours Truly, Bob Conway.”

Stay Tuned! More letters from “The Forgotten Cabinet” will be printed in the next issue of the Alumni Arrow.

* deceased

CLASS OF 1967

Timothy DeShon and his wife, Charlotte, live in Akron and have raised two daughters, Marissa (27) and Michelle (27). He is a retired electrical project manager who says he is enjoying the gift of time that retirement has provided.

CLASS OF 1972

Jim Roetzel is a photographer whose work is featured in a traveling exhibit “Wings and Voices over the Cuyahoga: How Birds Connect Us.” Jim’s amazing bird photography is on display now through July at gallery space located at the Trail Mix Boston store in the Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Thurs.-Sun., 10 a.m.-5 p.m. The exhibit will then travel to Summit Metro Park locations in September and October. This exhibit will also be shown at the Summit County Courthouse, Cleveland-Hopkins International Airport, and Cuyahoga Community College. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/cuva/learn/wings-and-voices-of-the-cuyahoga.htm.

CLASSES OF 1975-76: MEMORIES OF COACH FENWICK '52

Several members of the classes of 1975-76 shared memories of their recently deceased, beloved basketball coach, Jim Fenwick '52, who was a fellow graduate of St. Sebastian and who coached basketball at our school for 19 years.

Pat Conley '75: “[Coach Fenwick] was the mentor I needed to not only make me a better player but a better person. He was as tough as nails but would always bring out the best in you. I know he dearly loved his family and was a great friend to all. Rest in peace, Coach, and thank you to all his family that shared him with us.”



Coach Jim Fenwick '52

Greg Getzinger '75: “Mr. (Coach) Fenwick was a basketball coach for St. Sebastian’s class of 1975 eighth grade basketball team. I played on that team. Most of our practices involved running laps, sprints and defensive drills. Once in good shape, he taught us defensive techniques. His philosophy was defense first. Offense second. We were in the best shape of our lives. Most games, we played a full court press. I think we had one offensive play that Coach Fenwick called the “Bread and Butter” play. Other than playing at a neighbor’s house who had a basketball hoop, most of us didn’t have basketball skills. We weren’t tall. We weren’t fast. Coach Fenwick conditioned us. He taught us to be disciplined. He taught us how to play defense and work as a team. We went undefeated that year and won the state championship. Growing up, few kids who play sports get a chance to play on an undefeated state championship team. Collectively, we as a team, have one person to thank for teaching us to be champions: Coach Fenwick ...

[Another] memory I recall happened when we played Akron St. Peter. The game was held at St. Sebastian’s gym. We were eighth graders with only a few team members who had a few extra inches of height. We had no real basketball talent or vertical leaping ability. Before the game, we peeked our heads out from our locker room to see who we were going up against. We were in shock with what we saw. Their teammates were quite a bit taller than us. Many of their classmates were dunking the ball. Our thoughts, dunking the ball in eighth grade? We’re going to get crushed! Thanks to Mr. Fenwick and his strong emphasis with conditioning and disciplined defense, we were in excellent shape and able to protect our half of the court. We ran a full court press for most of the game. We were able to steal the ball before they could get the ball to half court. After we’d steal the ball, we had fast break opportunities for easy layups. We beat St. Peter’s. I don’t recall the score, but it wasn’t close!”

Larry Aylward '76: “In the 8th grade, you don’t think about ‘running through a wall for someone,’ as the saying goes. But after playing for Coach Fenwick and Coach Mike Lobalzo at St. Sebastian in 1976, I would run through a wall for them on this day in 2022 -- and this being almost 50 years later. Coach Fenwick was tough, in your face and made you better. He made you accountable. And he was a helluva nice guy! All my sympathy and love to the Fenwick family.”

Please Share Your Team Photos!

Do you have a team photo from your days playing CYO sports at St. Sebastian? We would love to have a copy to keep on file in the archives and to share with alumni. Email us at alumni@stsebastian.org or contact Kathy Holaday: 330-836-2233 ext. 113.

CLASS OF 1984

John Najeway's business, Thirsty Dog Brewery, celebrated 25 years in Akron this year. John and his business were featured in an article on Cleveland.com posted on May 10.



CLASS OF 1994

Laura Viccaro and her husband Benjamin Snyder have two children: Mary (5) and Timothy (3). She writes, "My family and I moved to Pittsburgh, PA in high school, and we have been living here ever since ... I am an internal medicine physician." Laura adds, "I would love to bring my husband and children back to Akron to visit, especially to see St. Sebastian's again."

CLASS OF 1999

Kelli Ann Critchfield lives in Fairlawn with her fiancé and their children: Peyton (9), Madeline (8), Kaia (2) and Olivia (1). Kelli is a stay-at-home mom who is returning to the University of Akron to complete her degree while also running her own company as head designer of Bella Beadazzled.

CLASS OF 2001

Lauren Buehrle Junk was featured in the Akron Beacon Journal for her work to secure a grant for Oak Clinic, a non-profit center for people with multiple sclerosis located in Green. According to the article, Lauren is a nurse who works at the independent clinic, which serves about 1,800 patients.

CLASSES OF 2018-2020

Cassia Chivers '18 was one of several valedictorians (indicating a GPA of 4.0 or higher) of Firestone High School's Class of 2022.

Sawyer Huckabee '18 was named a National Merit Scholarship Finalist and earned the honor of Salutatorian for the Class of 2022 of Archbishop Hoban High School.



Cassia Chivers, Sawyer Huckabee, Xavier Vesco

Xavier Vesco '18 graduated at the top of his class at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School, earning the honor of Valedictorian for STVM. Xavier also received the OHSAA Scholar Athlete Award, which is presented to the student with the highest scholastic average and a minimum of four varsity letters in high school sports.

STVM graduates **Macy Askea '18** and **Tariq Montgomery '18** received the National Federation of High Schools National Award of Excellence, which honors two senior athletes who have displayed exemplary sportsmanship, ethics, and integrity. Tariq also received the Optimist Club of Akron Award, which recognizes two students from each Akron area high school who display excellence in scholarship, leadership and community service.

Anne Rea '20, Lizzy Saliga '19, and Nick Senko '18 were members of the 2021-22 STVM NASA Student Launch Team that took second place in this year's national competition. The team designed, built and launched a reusable rocket for this challenge managed by NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center. Anne and Lizzy served as overall project managers of the team.

Elizabeth Schlueter '19 (Outstanding Delegate award) and **J.P. Rybka '19** (Honorable Delegate award) contributed to the first place finish by STVM's Model UN team at The Ohio State University MUN competition, which maintained STVM's place as the top team in Ohio.

Several St. Sebastian alumni were chosen as leaders for STVM's house system teams for 2022-23: **Mary Hanlon '19, Noah Meyer '19, Julia Pentasuglio '19, Mia Ross '20, Clare Rothkopf '20, and Elizabeth Schlueter '19.**

Xavier Vesco '18 and **Noah Meyer '19** were members of STVM's Academic Challenge team that won first place in their televised competition against Southeast High School (Ravenna) and Sandy Valley (Magnolia). At the national tournament in Atlanta, they finished with a 5-5 record.

PLEASE VISIT!

CAMPUS TOURS

If you would like a tour of our campus, please contact Kathy Holaday at 330-836-2233 x113 or HoladayK@stsebastian.org. Kathy would be happy to show you around!

VIRTUAL TOUR

The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation created a special virtual tour as part of the Foundation's 50th anniversary celebrations. To view, please visit www.stsebastian.org/foundation and click on "Foundation's 50th Anniversary Virtual Tour."

From the Forgotten Cabinet, (letter from Ed Gemind '39) cont.

I am glad that I was able to attend a Catholic School because I was taught obedience, promptness and respect for authority all of which are necessary in Army life. Yours respectfully, Pvt. Ed Gemind. P.S. Please say 'hello' to Fathers Schwartz and Flynn for me."

We have included more alumni letters on page 3 of the newsletter, and we will feature additional items in the next issue. To view the full collection of Fr. Valencheck's Angelus letters, please visit the parish website at: www.stsebastian.org/news/updates-fr-valencheck. The Akron Beacon Journal also published a story on April 14, 2022 about the letters that can be found online by searching the ABJ website (www.ohio.com).

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE WINNERS OF 2022-23 SCHOLARSHIPS!

Scholarships Funded Through The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation

The Mary Ley Burke Scholarship: Luca Hall, Maximillian Hickey, Frances Knauer, Connor Whitney
The Christopher James Consilio Memorial Scholarship: Jackson Chapin, Madelyn Kastelic, Rowan Kelly, Zoey Zachardy
The Dayspring Opportunity Scholarship: Trisha Dakhore
The Dayspring Tuition Grant: Mateo Neugebauer
The Denise Maroon Finley Memorial Scholarship: Sophia Burgoyne
The Gerstenmaier Family Scholarship: Suzana Borges, Max Sinsley
GOAL Scholarship (Graves O'Neill Academic Leaders): Simon Borges, Lydia Chivers, Aubrey Coates, Thomas Myers, Nick Paxton, Charlotte Ryan, Ryan Senko, Adeline Trenor
The Hanlon Family Scholarship: Parker Chapin, Zoe Obringer
Frances L. Sharp Scholarship: Sophia Brdarski, Gabriella Deagan

Scholarships Funded Through St. Sebastian Parish School/Parish Related Groups

HASA Youth Christian Service Scholarship: Sebastian Blaser, Isabella Incorvia
The Knights of Columbus Council #14255 Reverend Terry Peacock Scholarship: Sophia Burgoyne, Timothy Sullivan
The Sanctuary Society Service Scholarship: Sophia Burgoyne
The St. Irene Principal's Scholarship: Susan Thomas, Sadie Borges



++ We Will Remember ... ++

The Alumni Association extends our sincerest sympathy to the families and friends of our deceased alumni (January to mid-June, 2022). If you learn of the passing of a St. Sebastian alumnus, please contact us by phone at 330-836-2233 x119 or by email at alumni@stsebastian.org.

Patricia Long Najeway '44, February 20, 2022
John C. Trippe '44, October 16, 2021
Paul R. Baldacci '47, November 20, 2021
Thomas R. Dettling '48, March 21, 2022
Elizabeth Kraker Schorr '49, April 20, 2022
James F. Fenwick '52, April 8, 2022
Robert T. Meadows '52, March 31, 2022
Karen White Guistino '57, January 6, 2022

Kathleen Jacobs Harvey '60, June 18, 2022
Kenneth R. Cavanaugh '68, September 12, 2021
Eugene P. Wiandt '68, February 3, 2022
Albert R. Sawaya II '72, February 2, 2022
Susan Abdenour Foley '73, February 8, 2022
Douglas J. Sain '78, April 25, 2022
John "Andy" Balas '90, June 10, 2022

SAVE THE DATE: UPCOMING REUNIONS AND EVENTS

Christopher James Consilio Memorial Events

August 26: Golf Outing @ Paradise Lake, Mogadore
August 27: "Chris Fest" @ Zwisler Hall, featuring food, drinks, and live music. Proceeds to benefit the Christopher James Consilio Memorial Scholarship Endowment. Register at chrisfestakron.com.

Class of 1982: 40 Year Get Together

August 19 @ 6 p.m., St. Sebastian Courtyard. Bring your own beverages; light snacks provided. RSVP to Marcy Smith: Chefms68@aol.com, 330-962-4095

Class of 1972: 50th Reunion

September 9 @ 6 p.m., drinks at The Thirsty Dog
September 10 @ 6 p.m., Portage Country Club,

followed by an after party at the home of Kathy and Orville Reed. Optional Mass at 4:30 p.m. Please contact Anne Vainer at annevainer@att.net or Alice Luse at alicluse@sbcglobal.net for more information.

Class of 1975: Plans are in the works for a gathering in late fall. Please contact Jackie Paparella at jpaparella@chez-del.com for more information.

Class of 1993: 30 Year Gathering in 2023

The Class of 1993 is hoping to gather in Akron next year, possibly the end of September, 2023. Please contact Mary Kilian Tetrault at 206-406-8069 or maryetetrault@gmail.com to provide input on when in 2023 would be best.

ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WELCOMES 43 GRADUATES FROM THE CLASS OF 2022

Congratulations to the St. Sebastian Parish School Class of 2022: Steven Bitecofer III, Sebastian Blaser, Catherine Bordenkircher, Suzana Borges, James Brewer, Sophia Burgoyne, Miles Burnette, Robert Butler III, Sienna Byard, Jackson Chapin, Joseph Danzy IV, Peter de Boer, Colin DiNicola, Tommy Haller, Ella Hammer, Annica Holvey, Isabella Incorvia, Jack Jendrisak, Kathleen Jones, Zachary Karhoff, Madelyn Kastelic, Rowan Kelly, Alexandria Krohn, Lucille Langen, Soren Liston, Dietrich Loyed, Grace Mahaney, Chase Reisinger, Jackson Rodeman, Charles Rodriguez, Jude Rothkopf, Taylor Sakowicz, Everett Salisbury, Owen Schlueter, Maxwell Sinsley, Quinn Slota, Logan Smith, Nathan Sparhawk, Timothy Sullivan, Susan Thomas, Lilianna Williams, Quinn Yori, and Zoey Zachardy. They will continue on to the following high schools: Archbishop Hoban (15), Bishop Kenny, FL (1), Copley (1), National Inventors Hall of Fame STEM (2), St. Vincent-St. Mary (21), and Walsh Jesuit (3).

CLASS OF 2022 FAMILY LEGACIES: The Class of 2022 included nine children/grandchildren/great-grandchildren of alumni: Catie Bordenkircher (daughter of Steve Bordenkircher '87), Sienna Byard (daughter of Tara Boswell '98), Annica Holvey (daughter of Erica Lupica Holvey '91), Madelyn Kastelic (daughter of John Kastelic '82), Dietrich Loyed (son of Matthew Loyed '90), Grace Mahaney (grandchild of Jolean Schnee Mahaney '57 and great-grandchild of Marjorie Ulrich Schnee '31), Jude Rothkopf (son of Tricia Bedell Rothkopf '95), Susie Thomas (daughter of Joe Thomas '87 and grandchild of Marie Ann Wright Thomas '52), and Zoey Zachardy (daughter of Jason Zachardy '88 and grandchild of John Zachardy '62).

