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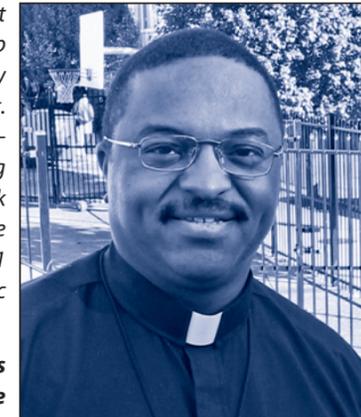
VOLUME 4, NUMBER 1 • FALL 2011 SINCE 1858

SAINT AUGUSTINE SAINTS NEWS



Interview with Rev. Patrick A. Smith

Working with a group of parishioners, Fr. Pat helped St. Augustine Catholic School develop a 5-year strategic plan that was accepted by the Archdiocese of Washington so that St. Augustine Catholic School could assume day-to-day management of the school beginning in July 2008. We sat down with Fr. Pat to talk about how the school is progressing. A native of Washington, D.C., he has been a priest for 21 years and has served at St. Augustine Catholic Church as pastor since 2004.



Q: We've seen the addition of some significant resources to the afterschool program. In addition to the Fencing Club, American Sign Language and Dance Ministry, CYO Cheerleading and Basketball are returning, and we also have a Chess Club. How were you able to do that?

Fr. Pat: We're really happy to continue our relationship with the National Fencing Foundation of Washington, D.C., and to continue to make improvements in our afterschool program, first of all through our new vice principal, Mr. Raven Wilkins, as well as through the work of Sister Lucy Dei, HHCJ.

We've been able to implement ideas and feedback from our parents. I've seen great improvements in our afterschool program.

Q: This year has brought four new teachers to the St. Augustine School staff. What do you think of the talents they bring to the school?

Fr. Pat: We're very excited to have welcomed four new teachers in our primary grades. We had a very extensive interview process, with the partnership between Sister Gloria, our principal, and a retired Montgomery County principal and alumna, Donna Pasteur, who did an excellent job vetting candidates. The parent feedback I've heard about the new teachers is very positive.

Q: We're in the fourth year of the 5-year St. Augustine Catholic School Strategic Plan. How is the school doing, in your estimation?

Fr. Pat: We continue to make strides to strengthen the school at all levels, including curriculum development and academic excellence.

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Story ideas for the newsletter? Please contact **Bill Murray** at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Would you like to update your address for our records?
 Please complete an alumni contact form at www.staug-dc.org/alumni.html.

We welcome inquiries from alumni, former students and anyone interested in our school.

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A newsletter for alumni, parents and friends of St. Augustine Catholic School of Washington, D.C.

Fencing Club takes root at St. Augustine School

In less than a dozen years, Japhiree Jackson would like to become an Olympic-class fencer.

After finishing in first place among seven fencers in an intramural competition for the St. Augustine School Fencing Club, Japhiree just might have a chance if the middle school student continues to work hard.

"I'm amazed at the footwork and also how he uses his hands in an artistic way," said Japhiree's mother, Alicia Jackson. She likes how her son seems to express his anger less, now that he has the positive outlet of fencing. After watching Olympic fencing on television, the 2010-2011 school year enabled Japhiree his first opportunity to fence, thanks to three men: George King, Mark Miller and Alex Ryjik.

Three officers with the National Fencing Foundation of Washington, D.C., the three men launched the St. Augustine School Fencing Club in late 2010, following years of work at the Kennedy Recreation Center in the Shaw neighborhood, where King and other coaches from the National Fencing Foundation of Washington, D.C. taught fencers of all ages. Following the launch of the club at their school, 35 students from St. Augustine School (Pre-K through 8th Grade, at 15th & V Streets, N.W.) participated during the club's first year.

"This is one of the ways we can thank the world of fencing for the opportunities," Coach Ryjik said. A native of St. Petersburg, Russia, he has been a fencer for 35 years and came to the U.S. 20 years ago. "I didn't speak a word of English when I came to the U.S.," he recalled. "I was made to feel welcome," in his adopted country.

Coach Miller came to the sport of fencing through his children, who learned at Coach Ryjik's Virginia Academy of Fencing. Coach King, who assumed full responsibility for the St. Augustine School Fencing Club in September 2011 with more than two dozen students participating, fences six days a week and is a retired police officer who was inspired by the New York-based Peter Westbrook Foundation and its success at introducing urban children to fencing.

Coach King, who also learned through the Virginia Academy of Fencing, reported that peer pressure can turn some young people off to fencing, because their friends might think that basketball or football are "cooler." Through coaching two to three days each week at St. Augustine Catholic School, which was founded in 1858 by free men of color and emancipated slaves, Coach King hopes that the passion he has for fencing catches on among not only Japhiree Jackson but many other young people.

Class of 2011 High School Acceptances

Congratulations to the Class of 2011, to their parents and to our eighth grade homeroom teacher, Mrs. Helene Cropper, for their receiving acceptance offers to the following schools:

- Archbishop Carroll High School *
 - Benjamin Banneker High School
 - Bishop McNamara High School *
 - DeMatha Catholic School *
 - Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School *
 - Duke Ellington School of the Arts
 - Elizabeth Seton High School *
 - Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School *
 - The Heights School *
 - McKinley Technology High School
 - Milton Hershey School *
 - Our Lady of Good Counsel High School *
 - St. John's College High School *
 - Dr. Henry A. Wise High School
- *Denotes a Catholic School



Mrs. Helene Cropper,
8th Grade Homeroom Teacher

Our Congratulations to the Class of 2011

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| • Elexia Alleyne | • Lenae Meyers |
| • Imanzhai Banner | • Christian Mullins |
| • Jemiah Brown | • Sarah Munoz |
| • Lydia Coleman | • John Riley |
| • Sally Davies | • Imani Roberts |
| • Noah Ghide | • Chardonnay Robertson |
| • Chardale Graves | • Messai Tadesse |
| • Treasure Green | • Sem Temesghen |
| • Joshua Greene | • Marchello Thomas |
| • Ja'Nai Hall | • Taylor Tyce-Green |
| • Tselote Holley | • Michala Slade |
| • Precious Iloka | • Rosa Villalobos |
| • Princess Iloka | • Jahara Woods |
| • Abia Khan | • Sahara Woods |
| • Ebony Manning | • Diallo Young |
| • Margarita Martinez | |

the youngest kids – the kindergarten and first graders – they say and asked what was on their minds."

"The highlight of the day came when we had some extra time, and I asked the third and fourth graders to sing the school song. It was a great moment for me," Riley said.

"It was my pleasure to be there, and to see the children's eyes light up as we spoke. Of course, the judicial robe and the gavel both added an additional dimension," said Judge Rohulamin Quander, a parishioner and administrative judge for the District of Columbia. "I used the gavel each time, demanding 'Order in the court,' to

underscore that it's all about learning to behave yourself, so that you won't have to go to court, and doing the right thing." Judge Quander is also the Mayor's Agent for Historical Preservation.

"Discipline too is the hallmark of achievement. At their ages, they are not focused upon careers, but it is never too early to learn how to become good citizens. And that is why we were there," Judge Quander said.

Those who would like to volunteer to speak at the next Career Day should email Bill Murray at bmurray@saintaugustine-dc.org.

Alumni Notes Alumni Notes Alumni Notes Alumni Notes

Jolyn Johnson Smith '68 was profiled recently in the Richmond Free Press for her service as president of Virginia Heroes. The program benefits about 500 children at Elkhardt and Henderson Middle Schools in Richmond. It was founded in 1991 by Richmond native Arthur Ashe, the late great tennis star, to match volunteering adults with mentees in the schools. The mentors visit twice a month to spend quality time with the students.



Carmelita (Joy) White '68 and Timothy White are expecting 3rd grandchild in July 2011. Nicole (daughter of Carmelita and Tim) and Kevin Forrest are to be proud parents of a baby girl; joining Katharine (4 yrs) and William (2 yrs).

Shonya Carlock '81 serves as vice president at the Association of Government Accountants, Washington Chapter. A former parishioner at St. Augustine who sang in the Gospel Choir, she works at the Department of Homeland Security and holds the PMI Project Management Professional certification.

Crystal Lewis Smith '87 reports, "my husband Roy M. Smith II, and I are now the proud parents of our first child. We had a precious little girl, Reece Michael Smith born on April 12, 2011 and also celebrated our five-year wedding anniversary on April 22nd!"

Leonard Nickens '87 was recently promoted to Infrastructure Engineer II at AAA of Northern California, Nevada & Utah. Despite living out west, Leonard remains a diehard Washington Redskins fan.

Kellie Benefield Everette '87 launched CakeNuts Cakes, an online bakery based in Fort Washington, in October 2010, after her husband Kevin encouraged her to make the move. In late April, she said that she was booked through the middle of June. "All my cakes are homemade, created and designed by yours truly," she says. "We specialize in homemade cakes, cupcakes, and pies." CakeNuts' website is www.cakenuts.com, and Kellie started baking at the age of 9 with her Easy Bake Oven, inspired by her mother, Stephanie Benefield, and her grandmother, Frances Burke. Her father, Steve Benefield, was a longtime CYO basketball coach at St. Augustine.



Nicole Brown '94 is working on her second degree, which will be in Legal Studies from the University of Maryland, University College. "I have 2 more years to go," Nicole reports. Within the last year, she was promoted to a Business Analyst at the National Flood Insurance Program.

His latest Air Force assignment has taken **J.P. James '96** to Okinawa, Japan.

Sgt. Thaddeus Harrington '99 and **Joyce Castro Rexach '00** got married in Arlington, Va., on Aug. 29. The next day, Sgt. Harrington deployed in support of Operation New Dawn in Iraq with the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade of the Maryland Army



National Guard. Sgt. Harrington is a photographer.

The couple had a small ceremony before the deployment and plan to have a larger ceremony upon his return from deployment.

After graduating from Columbia University in New York, Erica Doe '02 has enrolled at Syracuse University pursuing a Master's degree in Social Work. Her concentration is Community Organization, Policy, Planning and Administration. "I am currently a support counselor for undergraduate students in the college who are on academic probation. For next year's field placement, I am interviewing with organizations that will allow me to work with youth with various disabilities," she reports.

Tametra J. Thomas '09 is a junior at Crossland High School in Temple Hills, where she has a 3.875 grade point average. She holds the rank of Master Sergeant and is in her third year in the Marine Corps Junior ROTC program there. She takes AP Psychology, AP World History, AP Language, Chemistry, Spanish 2, JROTC, Algebra 2 and SAT Prep.



During her Spring Break last year, she came back to St. Augustine Catholic School to serve as an after-school volunteer. "There are a lot more students," than when she attended the school, she said. She said that Mrs. Lorraine Lee, middle school social studies teacher and seventh grade homeroom teacher, and Mrs. Delores Grymes, kindergarten teacher's assistant, gave her a particularly warm welcome back.

St Augustine Boys' Varsity basketball 2011 overview

By Clinton Perrow

Bringing back faint memories of past CYO glories, St. Augustine's Boys' Varsity Basketball team finished its Winter 2011 season on a high note, finishing with a 14-6 record. The team won nine out of its last 10 games and placed 3rd in the Georgetown Prep Holiday Tournament, after losing the first game of the tournament.

The team had players from St. Augustine and St. Gabriel Parish (St. Gabriel Catholic School closed in 2008.

Parishioners however are eligible to play in CYO). Head Coach Kevin Jones with assistant coaches Louis Wingfield and Vince Simmons started the season with some lofty goals. They wanted to be undefeated in the classroom as well as on the court. The goals were to be on time for school and practice and to finish first at everything that they did whether it was a drill on the court or a practice quiz for a test.

The coaching staff motivated the teams to be the best at everything. Coach Jones found a way to get our boys to understand how important it is to be dependable, to work hard and to set team and personal goals. First year Athletic Director Clinton Perrow was proud that the team competed in the Campbell league with the best talented teams from the metro area and finished 14-6.



"I was pleased with our first year," said Athletic Director Clinton Perrow, "but we are striving to be great and we are working hard every day to reach our goals. Keep your eye on us, because you will like what you see from the Varsity team (in 2011-2012)." Coach Perrow was hired at St. Augustine Catholic School with the strong backing of Rev. Patrick A. Smith, pastor of St. Augustine Catholic Church, to build a strong CYO program, and Coach Perrow has responded by focusing initially on CYO Cheerleading and Basketball.

The Junior Varsity boys' season can best be described as what could have been. Led by first year head coach Richard Landcaster and assistant coach Davon Harris, the team sputtered for their first three to four games but "after more gym time for practice, the team started to come together" said coach Landcaster. After a slow start, the talented team went on to win four out of their last five games to finish 9-7: just one game away from a championship game -- not bad for a new coach.

The Rookie team, led by Coach Ril, played with lots of spirit and heart. Although their record was (3-6), it does not reflect their true effort on the court. The rookie boys were relentless in their efforts during their games on Saturdays. They are looking forward to come back as JV players for next season.

More than 20 speakers, representing a broad variety of careers, came to St. Augustine Catholic School on May 31 to speak with our 206 students about their work.

Speakers spoke about careers in banking, business, economics, government, international development, law, medicine, military and non-profit organizations among other careers. Working with Bill Murray, Mr. Raven Wilkins, resource teacher recently promoted to vice principal, helped to spearhead the event. Many of the speakers volunteer their time at St. Augustine School, are donors or have children attending the school.

"I thought this career day was the best one I have attended," said Mike Riley '65, a parishioner who is also associate athletic director at the University of the District of Columbia. "It was well organized and the host kept us restricted to the set time to speak. The funniest part of the day were



Career Day speakers included (left to right) Chris Davitt, President, Rupper Nurseries, Andrea Wilson, Ph.D. of the City of Alexandria Housing Authority Chris Davitt and Ms. Jocelyn Steiner, attorney

From the Principal's Desk

Working on toward continued students growth

The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to:

- Create a home environment that encourages learning;
- Communicate high, yet reasonable expectations for children's achievement and future careers;
- Become involved in children's education at school and in the community.

More and more of our students are applying, enrolling and graduating from very reputable high schools. Saint Augustine is a challenging school with strong Christian values. Our strong academic program and the availability of so many extra-curricular activities, including fencing, basketball, chess, dance, music, and photography, keep our students interested and engaged at Saint Augustine. This year we have twenty six beautiful and handsome young ladies and men that are working very hard to be counted among Saint Augustine's "most successful" alumni.

On Oct. 31, we closed out our first quarter for the 2011-2012 school year. Saint Augustine could not operate without the help and dedication put forth by our faculty, staff, and most importantly, by our parents. Our success

as an elementary school is not simply attributed to good leadership and hard-working employees; we are able to grow and prosper as a school community because of the strong relationships we have with our alumni, parents, our transition team, our pastor, our parish, and our donors; all who have given us loyal support along the way.

Our congratulations goes to our newly hired teachers; their wonderful dedication cannot go un-notice. Ride on my dear people for the Lord is going to grant us all a befitting reward.

We welcome all to our school who are in search of a home where, like Saint Augustine, our patron saint, we love to learn and we learn to love.



Sister Gloria Agumagu HHCJ

Planned Giving Corner

Leave a gift that lasts. After you take care of your family and loved ones, please consider naming St. Augustine Catholic School of Washington, D.C. in your will. Thank you for helping to secure our future, as we carry forth our proud history, which began in 1858.

Interview with Rev. Patrick A. Smith

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Spiritually, we think our school has a very strong Catholic identity through the presence of our religious sisters. Morally, we provide service opportunities for our students. Our goals moving forward include increasing the number of parishioner children in our school. We are also striving to be a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence (U.S. Education Department). We also have a long-term goal of establishing an endowment to support our school, through which we would draw off the interest and let the principal amount in the endowment remain into perpetuity.

Q: The school recorded double-digit test scores on the Terra Nova test last spring. What do you make of that?

Fr. Pat: Through our tutoring program - and the efforts of our teachers to track the individual development of each child - we saw a marked improvement in Reading, Language Arts and Math last school year. We've been particularly successful at helping children who initially performed below grade level to get to grade level. We've also done well with taking students who are performing at grade level and helping them perform above grade level.

Four new teachers at St. Augustine

For the 2011-2012 school year, St. Augustine Catholic School has welcomed four new primary level teachers:

Kindergarten – Ms. Alexis Latney



Ms. Alexis Latney is a graduate of Florida A&M University and has been teaching for four years in both the public and private schools. "I am looking forward to a very successful year, and I know you are too," she said when asked what message she wants to convey. "I have high expectations for your child, and I will do all that I can to help your

child achieve these expectations." In her spare time, she enjoys reading, yoga and horseback riding.

First Grade – Ms. Alexa Wilson



Ms. Alexa Wilson graduated from Towson University in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. "I love teaching, and I am beyond excited to be teaching at Saint Augustine this coming year," she said. "I believe that all children are capable of learning and deserve an excellent education. I strive to uphold this ideal

in my classroom by using a variety of tools and methods to help my students develop mastery of the curriculum standards. My lessons are differentiated not only based on the ability level of the student but also the learning style preferences that my students show. I encourage students to challenge themselves rather than compete against their classmates." She looks forward to working with the students, their parents, and the faculty and staff at St. Augustine to create a positive and engaging learning environment. When not in the classroom, she loves to run, teach ballet, and paint.



Third Grade – Ms. Lana Tsimberg



Ms. Lana Tsimberg is a new D.C. resident; raised in Dallas, she studied Childhood Education at Texas A&M University. After college, Lana moved to New York City to teach. Born in the Ukraine, Lana speaks Russian fluently. Considering herself a well-rounded, dedicated, and enthusiastic person with many different cultural experiences, she

is providing her third grade students with a multicultural classroom. She has created a classroom that is open to learning and understanding those who are different from each other, and one that will meet each student's academic and social needs. Having taught in several urban neighborhoods in the past, Lana has a good grip on classroom management. Her classroom management techniques involve each students taking an active responsibility for his own actions. Her students usually come home with weekly academic and behavioral reports, receiving positive phone calls, and a wide variety of homework assignments.

Fourth Grade – Ms. Lisa Monroe



Born and raised in Washington DC, Ms. Lisa Monroe obtained her undergraduate degree in Psychology from Fisk University in Nashville, Tenn. There she developed a strong passion for education, so along with her Psychology degree she completed the Teacher's Education Program

concentrating in Elementary/Middle School Education to prepare her for working with young people. Ms. Monroe has taught for nine years in District of Columbia and Prince George's County public schools. Her goal at St. Augustine is to motivate students to do their best and extend their own personal limits. In Ms. Monroe's classroom, students must commit to a level of performance that challenges them to reach their full potential. In her spare time, Ms. Monroe is a photographer, a Girl Scout Leader, and she enjoys traveling and listening to music. Like Ms. Tsimberg, she is a Dallas Cowboys fan. Members of the school community are learning to practice Christian charity during the NFL season.

St. Augustine School playground size doubles

It took nearly a year, but Greg Hunkins has completed his every-challenging Eagle Scout assignment.

A rising high school junior, Greg worked with 16 other members of Boy Scouts Troup 380 of Capitol Hill and Troop 343 of Bolling Air Force Based to install a Super Satellite playground set at St. Augustine Catholic School in one day, June 21.

Most of the Boy Scouts are Catholic, attending schools such as Gonzaga College High School, St. Peter's Interparish School and St. Vincent Palotti High School. One sweating

boy wore a scapular around his neck, a testimony to his faith. The boys more than earned the lunch of Popeye's fried chicken, string beans, mashed potatoes, onion rings, cornbread and watermelon that the Hunkins treated them to in the St. Augustine School Cafeteria.

"I did a lot of research," Greg explained, between rolling wheel barrows full of mulch from the St. Augustine basketball courts to the school playgrounds, which is located behind the Gingras Ecumenical Center. "I wanted to do something I could come back later with my kids to show them I'd done."

The project almost didn't come to fruition. Within days, Greg will move to Egypt with his mother, Christine Hunkins, and his two siblings to join their father, an Air Force officer of 23 years who was assigned more than two months ago as an air attache in Cairo.

Greg raised the \$5,000 project cost, and he selected All Recreation, Inc., a playground distributor that serves the District of Columbia, Kentucky and Virginia, to handle most of the installation work, per liability insurance regulations. Greg chose to work with St. Augustine School to fulfill his dream of installing a playground for a Catholic organization after two previous opportunities fell through. "It was frustrating," he said.

Greg and Christine Hunkins approached Sister Gloria Agumagu, HHCJ, principal of St. Augustine Catholic School, and later Fr. Patrick A. Smith, pastor of St. Augustine Catholic Church, in March. "Her eyes lit up when I told her about our idea," Christine Hunkins recalled. Sister Gloria

had just told a group of school parents that one of her top priorities was to increase the school playground size.



Greg raised half of the project cost through the Catholic Chapel at Bolling Air Force Base.

The Super Satellite can accommodate up to eight children 5 to 12 years, and it is 16 feet by 9 feet. Made of galvanized steel tubing with powder-coated paint, it features three climbers and three fireman's poles.

A red brick wall frames the playground on one side, while a white statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, with his hands folded in prayer, stands vigil before the playground set.

For their part, St. Augustine School officials hope that the Hunkins family and perhaps some of the Boy Scouts can return during the school year to witness the joyful look on our students' faces as they play on the playground set.

United Way/CFC Open Enrollment Season

If you are a federal worker participating in the Combined Federal Campaign, please consider making a pledge to St. Augustine Catholic School (CFC #2000) during this open enrollment season. We are receiving more than \$26,000 in contributions this year through the CFC and appreciate your support.

If you work for the DC Government or another organization that participates in the United Way of the National Capital Area – such as Best Buy, Comcast, Covington & Burling, FedEx, UPS and Verizon – please make a pledge during this open enrollment season to benefit St. Augustine Catholic School (United Way #9678). Our 192 students thank you!