



THE SHIELD

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Silent Knight, Holy Lights!

By Juraj Plaza - Knight Writer Student Journalist



Lourdes Academy Technology Director Josh Klopff, with the help of students and staff, spent much of November diligently working on a monumental project for the holiday season: a Christmas light display synchronized to music—“Silent Knight, Holy Lights.”

Christmas is a time for families to come together and have fun celebrating the season. The Lourdes Academy family is no different. Students and teachers got involved in preparing for the light show display to help Klopff with the project. Math teacher Dan Heiser’s geometry class took measurements for the trees to calculate the number of lights needed.

Band teacher Michelle Sorenson’s class helped choose songs which they programmed for the show. Juniors Julian Foss and Nicholas Pearlman, senior Kendall Prehn, and freshman Trevor Krentz chose the songs, *Let it Snow*, *Let it Snow*, *Joy to the World*, *Wizards in the Winter*, *Sleigh Ride*, *Carol of the Bells*, and *Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree*, which were broadcast on 88.3 FM.

The technology department provided computers and components needed for programming the songs to synchronize with the light show.

Lourdes Campus Minister, Emily Boyce, said that it was a pleasure for her to be part of this marvelous idea, and even storing the 20,000 Christmas lights in her office and decorating the Christmas trees made her happy.

Families from all the schools in the system also lent a hand by donating nearly 30,000 Christmas lights for the display. Klopff arranged for the music to broadcast on 88.3 FM so visitors could enjoy the show as they drove by or pull into Circle Drive to view the entire concert.

Outside help was also required for the light show. Triumph Electric brought in their cherry picker to help set up the lights on the tallest trees in front of the school. The Northwestern newspaper featured a story on “Silent Knight, Holy Lights” and WOSH AM radio interviewed Lourdes Academy Principal Kyle Schleis about the project as well.

Klopff said the reason he wanted to take on the challenge of a light show this big was that he feels Christmas is the most special time of the year, and he wanted to bring joy and happiness to people during this special season. ♥



Sophomores Cherry Lee and Jack Dolan measure trees in front of Lourdes Academy High School in preparation for the “Silent Knight, Holy Lights” display.

It's a great day to be a Knight!

The Jug is Back

Make your voice heard during the Alumni Brown Jug competition

"Yeah Red, Yeah White. Yeah Team, Fight, Fight! Each year at Homecoming, classes vie for the Brown Jug school spirit award (and bragging rights for the year) by chanting this mantra at the top of their lungs. A tradition started decades ago, students today continue this beloved event.



Now, you can continue to show your school spirit by competing for the Alumni Brown Jug award. The class with the highest participation in our fall appeal through March 31 will have their name engraved on a Brown Jug plaque outside the school office.

Come back for a reunion, tour the

school and see your class' name permanently and prominently displayed. The classes with the most participants and highest giving total will both be recognized. And, first-time donors making a gift of \$50 or more will receive a free Lourdes Academy t-shirt.

Your gift to the Lourdes Fund through the annual appeal helps support our amazing teachers, enhance curriculum and extra-curricular activities, upgrade technology and provide a faith foundation for our students.



Giving is easy. Log on to LourdesAcademyOshkosh.org/give by March 31 to qualify for the Alumni Brown Jug or contact Karen Boehm at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org. You can also give by returning the reply card that was included in your appeal mailing.

Thank you for supporting Lourdes Academy and for Renewing the Tradition for future generations. 🍷

Honor a loved one



Families lit candles in memory of loved ones at the Alumni Memorial Mass.

Each year, Lourdes Academy holds the Alumni Memorial Mass with a luncheon to honor deceased alumni, faculty and staff and to celebrate their lives with families and loved ones. This event is held the Tuesday before Thanksgiving at Lourdes High School.

In addition to the Alumni Memorial Mass, families can also have a mass said in their loved one's name or have an engraved brick placed in the Garden of Remembrance as a permanent tribute. Mass intentions are \$10 each and bricks can be purchased for \$100. For more information contact Lourdes Academy:

- Mass intentions - Emily Boyce at (920) 235-5670, ext. 118 or eboyce@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org
- Memorial bricks - Gabrielle Jacobs at (920) 426-3626 or [gjacobson@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org](mailto:gjacobs@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org). 🍷

Sponsor a Leader, Support the Future

The Tomorrow's Leaders program was developed four years ago to help nurture and mentor high school students to be leaders in their school, churches, community and homes.

Throughout their four years in the program, Tomorrow's Leaders study leadership characteristics, case studies and ethics, and finally learn to put their leadership in action to serve the community and school.

Each year, 10 students per class are awarded a \$500 renewable scholarship. Several alumni have stepped forward to sponsor a student throughout their leadership journey for \$500 or a class for \$5,000. Students connect with their sponsor each year to thank them and update them on their progress in the class.

To sponsor a Tomorrow's Leader, contact Karen Boehm at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org. 🍷

Crucifix donated for Lourdes Chapel

The Lourdes Chapel recently received a new crucifix (pictured above) from RLS Machining. The crucifix was custom designed and hand-crafted with carefully chosen Bible verses. Thank you to RLS Machining for this beautiful addition to our chapel. 🍷

IT Professionals

By the year 2018, there will be 1.2 million unfilled STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) jobs in the United States because there won't be enough qualified workers to fill them (US Dept. of Commerce).

As part of its mission to prepare students for life, college and a continued relationship with God, Lourdes Academy is working to reverse this trend by providing STEM education throughout its PreK-12 system. Last year, Lourdes partnered with Project Lead the Way to introduce STEM curriculum in Grades 4-6 and this year expanded that curriculum to Grades 2-7. It also incorporated Computer Science modules in kindergarten through Grade 5, as well as in high school.

"As the demand for STEM-related careers grows, especially in the area of information technology (IT) and computer science, Lourdes is committed to preparing the future workforce by offering modern, evolving courses," said Curriculum Director Jon Fleming.

Alumni in IT professions are serving as resources to Lourdes' expanding STEM program as members of its STEM Partnership Team, career mentors and financial supporters to name a few. Thanks to the preparation they received at Lourdes, many alumni are established in or preparing for careers in IT and computer science.

A Hobby Turned Career

Herb Ilk ('90) earned a degree in chemical engineering at Northwestern University and worked as an environmental engineer out of college. But it didn't take long for him to realize it wasn't the path for him. He had, however, taken a programming class in college and found he enjoyed the creativeness of programming. This, combined with his love of fantasy sports, would soon lead him down an entirely different career path.



Herb Ilk, RotoWire.com

In 1997, Ilk, along with three college friends, started RotoNews, a fantasy sports website covering baseball, football and hockey. Fantasy sports was evolving and they wanted to create an online environment with player and game statistics, news, history and information.

With just one programming class under his belt, Ilk took to the books to teach himself programming and software development.

"Now I feel like I could program just about anything, but that was not the case at the time," Ilk said. "A lot of programming has to do with creativity and problem solving. I gained a lot of that in math class with Mr. Knobloch. And, my senior year in high school, I wasn't going to take a lot of upper level classes, but Mr. Behring made me take

them anyway."

In 1999, the RotoNews team merged their business with Broadband Sports in California. While Broadband eventually folded, the fantasy sports division of the business was still successful.

"We were really young when we merged with them, around 27 at the time," he explained. "We didn't know all the ins and outs. We would have worked for a different business deal but we lacked experience."

In 2001, Ilk and his friends restarted the business under the name RotoWire.com, which now provides information to ESPN, NBA.com and CBS. RotoWire employs more than 30 full time and 50-70 part-time employees.

"Early on, it was more simple. We provided news, player rankings, etc. Now we need to have technical resources dedicated to providing information in real time. We work with Yahoo to provide everything from projected point scores and statistics to injury reports for baseball, football and hockey."

Ilk spends most of his time working with customers to develop new tools and products, and has five full time programmers on staff. New hires don't have to have a computer software development background, they just need to be creative, teachable, good at problem solving and passionate about sports.

"I'd rather have a smart, creative person who's interested in programming than someone who just programs what we tell them to," Ilk explained. "The last person we hired was a biomedical engineer who had no programming background. We enjoy figuring things out and coming out with a new development that will help the end user."

The Future of IT

Through much of high school, **Ryan McBride ('16)** had his heart set on a career in aerospace engineering. But the budding rocket scientist started investigating career paths within the information technology/computer science industry and is now finding himself on a new career track.

"I never thought I'd want to have a career with computers until I started reading about all of the different career paths you can take within the IT/Computer Science industry," McBride explained. "Then, one summer, I decided to



Ryan McBride ('16) is studying Computer Software Engineering at UW Madison. Also pictured, his sister Theresa McBride, (Lourdes Class of '12 and UW Madison Class of '16) earned a B.S.S. majoring in Actuarial Science.

learn programming and greatly enjoyed it, which led me to wanting to pursue a career in this field."

In his first year at the University of Wisconsin Madison, McBride is majoring in Computer Software Engineering with plans to work with network security, protecting companies' computer systems from security threats.

While McBride is still in the early stages of the program, he's discovered that analytical skills have proven to be extremely important so far.

"Being able to think in a logical way is important in order to work through the errors in a program," he explained. "Lourdes has prepared me the most by building up my ability to think analytically."

Teamwork has also been a crucial skill.

"One of the skills stressed in our Computer Science classes is working with a partner. We do our programs and labs with a partner to teach us how creating a program with someone else's input is different than creating the program solely by yourself."

An "Epic" Career

Heidi Sweet's ('89) original career plans didn't involve computer science. She was going to school for math and started to take the actuary exams, but she had time to earn a second major before graduating. She had taken a couple of computer science classes and found she enjoyed programming, so she pursued a second degree in Computer Software Development.



Heidi Sweet, Epic

She graduated from North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, the day before Thanksgiving in 1992 and started a career with Epic Systems, where she has been ever since. In that time, she's watched the company grow from a small organization with just over 30 employees to a leader in the health care software industry employing more than 9,000 people. Despite Epic's phenomenal growth, Sweet said the corporate culture has stayed the same.

"We take ownership in the company and in what we're giving to customers," she said. "We do what it takes to do things right and do things well. Epic is part of me and I want to take care of it."

Sweet's math background in high school helped her segue into the computer science classes. She credits former teacher Rich Knobloch as influencing her decision by instilling in her a love of math.

After more than 20 years in the industry, Sweet recognizes important qualities for employees pursuing a career in computer science and information technology. Logical and creative thinking skills, work ethic, adaptability and written and verbal communications are all important.

"Our job is to figure out the customers' end goal and determine the best way to help them reach that goal," Sweet explained. "You really have to learn a lot about the industry you're programming for. In our industry, health care has changed a lot. You have to be able to talk the same language."

Sweet is bringing her experience and expertise back to Lourdes where she has sons in middle and high school (and a third in college). She served as a member on the STEM Partnership Team for two years helping to launch Project Lead the Way (PLTW) and institute the first annual STEM Night at Lourdes.

"I really want to see our kids have more of an opportunity to get their feet wet with programming and technology; to be able to try it out before they get to college," Sweet said of her involvement.

This year, Lourdes Academy added PLTW's Intro to Computer Science and Computer Science Principles classes at the high school level, as well as PLTW's computer science modules in kindergarten through Grade 5.

"As we build the pipeline, I'm excited to see how the new classes go," Sweet said. "Things like this pique students' interest. We can continue to build on what we've started this year, getting kids interested so they want to take their learning to the next class or research on their own." 

Lourdes celebrates Catholic Schools Week

January 29-February 4, 2017

This month, Lourdes Academy joins Catholic schools throughout the country in celebrating Catholic Schools Week. The week is filled with activities to celebrate our "Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service," to open our doors to the community and to enjoy fellowship, friends and fun.

The week kicks off with the 6th Annual Scooter Hockey Tournament on January 27 at LAHS, followed by the All-System Mass on January 31 at 9:30 a.m. at Most Blessed Sacrament - St. Peter Site. Show your Knight pride at Red & White Knight on Feb. 3, 6 p.m. JV, 7:30 p.m. Varsity. (See the events page for details.)

Throughout the week, schools and parishes will be collecting hygiene products for the **Life Is Beautiful** campaign to benefit the Oshkosh Area Community Pantry. Items include soap, shampoo, conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Open houses are scheduled at all school sites and are a great opportunity for students to check out what Lourdes Academy has to offer.

- 8th Grade Step Up Day - Lourdes High School Fri., Jan. 13 - 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Future Freshman Knight - Lourdes High School Tues., Jan. 24 - 6 p.m.
- 5th Grade Step Up Day - Lourdes High School Fri., Feb. 10 - 11:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m.
- Peek Into Preschool, 4K & Kindergarten Wed., Feb. 1 - 6 p.m. - Cabrini site
Thurs., Feb. 2 - 6 p.m. - Seton site

For additional information or to reserve space at any of these events, contact Mary Beth Kelly at (920) 426-6421 or mbkelly@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.

Upcoming Events

Renew the tradition. Join Lourdes for these upcoming events.

Catholic Schools Week

Jan. 29-Feb. 4, 2017

Life is Beautiful Hygiene Drive

Through Feb. 7 at Lourdes Academy schools and the Oshkosh Catholic parishes

January

27 6th Annual Scooter Hockey Tournament

5:30 pm, Lourdes H.S.

31 All System Mass

9:30 am, Most Blessed Sacrament – St. Peter site

February

3 Red & White Knight Basketball Game

6 pm JV; 7:30 pm Varsity, Lourdes H.S.

18 Trivia Knight

TBD, St. Raphael Parish

March

30-April 1 Lourdes Academy Musical, "Curtains"

Grand Opera House

April

28 Awards & Recognition Dinner
LaSure's Banquet Hall

For more information on Catholic Schools Week activities, call (920) 426-3626.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

"I loved Lourdes. I am so glad I went there. I feel blessed that I did."

Paulette Cavanaugh ('63)

Alumni, businesses guide students' career paths



Trent Trofka ('19) and Juraj Plaza ('18) test out equipment at Fox Valley Technical College during Construction & Trade Scholars

When **Herb Ilk ('90)**, a computer software developer and business owner in Verona, learned that **Ryan McBride ('16)** was studying Computer Software Engineering at UW Madison, he offered to share his experiences with McBride and give him a tour of his company, RotoWire.

"I found it quite interesting," McBride said. "Herb told me about how they store all of the data they need to access, as well as what kind of programming languages they use to create their websites. I also find it nice just to know someone that I can ask questions or ask help from."

Ilk and McBride were part of a new Decision Tree Mentoring (DTM) effort at Lourdes Academy. DTM matches alumni with current students or recent graduates to share their experiences in their career field. A match can be as simple as a phone conversation or could evolve into a job shadow or internship experience.

DTM is the brainchild of alumnus **Chris Meidl ('79)**, a talent representative in the Nashville area. Meidl is developing the program with his sister **Barbara ('85)** who has a Masters in Leadership and experience working with thousands of college students in the varying phases of their academic career.

DTM is in its early phases connecting individuals by word of mouth, with hopes to grow in usability.

"Although in its initial stages, we hope DTM will provide an expanded virtual platform allowing mentees—

high school, college and young professional—a substantive connection point to glean from and interact with those who have gone before them into academic, professional and vocational areas," Meidl said.

In conjunction with DTM, Lourdes Academy offers the Scholars career exploration program, a concept introduced by alumnus **Dr. John Leschke ('76)**. Scholars brings high school students to local businesses to learn about career clusters, see the work environment first-hand and talk with professionals in the field. Leschke launched the first Medical Scholars program in 2015, and it was then expanded by Lourdes to include industries such as law, engineering, skilled trades, ministries in the church, hospitality, public safety and computer science, many of which have been hosted by alumni.

"The Lourdes Academy Scholars program is an incredible tool for our students to explore careers and seek a deeper understanding of their own skills, interests and values," said Kelly Thompson, high school counselor. "Career exploration is a pivotal way of demonstrating to students how the concepts they learn in high school have a direct connection to opportunities in various careers after high school and higher education."

To learn more about Decision Tree Mentoring or the Scholars program, contact Karen Boehm at (920) 426-3626, ext. 546 or kboehm@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org. 



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THE SHIELD

Lourdes Academy Alumni Newsletter

Special thanks to Bart Putzer, Class of 1984, for assisting with the layout & design of The Shield.

Like Lourdes Academy on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @lourdesacademy1.



UPCOMING LOURDES REUNIONS



Class of 1966 50th Reunion
September 10, 2016

Please stay in touch

Continue receiving the Shield and stay up to date on alumni news and events by updating your information (address, phone number and e-mail) on the Alumni link at lourdesacademyoshkosh.org or by contacting Shannon Gibson at (920) 426-3626, ext. 541 or sgibson@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org.

Class of 1977 - 40 Year Reunion

Date TBD

Contact Marianne (Rice) Spain at spains43061@yahoo.com
Follow Facebook for details (Lourdes Academy Class of 1977-Oshkosh)

Class of 1962 - 55 Year Reunion

September 23rd, 2017

Lourdes Academy High School Bill Behring Commons
Contact Patricia (Baier) Schumerth at pmschumerth@att.net

Class of 1967 - 50 Year Reunion

October 14th, 2017

Lourdes Academy High School Bill Behring Commons
Contact Randy Walter at 920-231-9675 or rwalter3517@att.net

Planning a reunion? Contact Shannon Gibson at 920-426-3626, ext. 541 or sgibson@lourdesacademyoshkosh.org for assistance. Lourdes Academy offers free mailing lists and facilities usage for Lourdes class reunions.