

Parish and Family Life Commission

By Loretta DeRuvo

Nearly 90 people attended the annual parish dinner on Epiphany Sunday, January 4, 2009. Working behind the scenes to make the occasion run smoothly were Mick and Mary Maggert, Mary Lou Lamb, Bill and Ruth Hawk, Amanda Norris, Barbara Price, Carol Marcello, Lois Toth, and Bob and Loretta DeRuvo. Adding to the festivities, Margaret Ayers prepared a beautiful, delicious cake in honor of Fr. Bill Casey's birthday.

Hello High School Students!

By Abby Conley

Father John asked me to give you my advice on making the transition from high school to college easier. I am currently a sophomore pursuing a nursing degree with plans on becoming a nurse anesthetist. My advice comes from personal experience, and these are the things that I believe helped me transition the best.

First, realize that it is never too early to start applying or looking at schools. I regret not taking the time to tour more schools or applying to a larger variety of colleges. While completing the applications is definitely time consuming, you will be happy once it is over. You will also appreciate having a wide range of schools to base your final decision on. Apply for every scholarship that you can! There are so many scholarships out there, but it is your responsibility to hunt them down. It is important to actively pursue your scholarship applications and even your college applications. Let people know you are interested, and they will help you.

When you are working on your applications, you will find that many ask for letters of recommendation. I believe it is extremely important to establish personal references. These can be teachers, coaches, mentors, or anyone who you feel would represent you in a positive way. Also, stay in touch with these people because you never know when they could help you out again.

However, my best piece of advice would be to take advantage of as many dual-enrollment classes that you can. I would recommend trying to get some of your weaker classes out of the way. For example, I took all six of my credit hours for English my senior year. This was a huge relief once I started college.

It is also important to get in the habit of proactively studying and not waiting to the last minute. In college, you have so much outside reading and work that it is best to do a little bit every night. This will help you learn the material better and help you be more prepared for class and tests.

I hope that you will find some of my advice helpful, and I wish you the best with your high school and college careers!

Hello Notre Dame Parish Friends...

By Mary Ann Laun

Please let us introduce ourselves: We are Gary and Mary Ann Laun, and we are relatively new in the area. Gary was born and raised in Shreveport, LA and joined the US Navy in 1966 where he served for 32 years. I am Mary Ann from Auburn, NY. I have had two basic jobs, one as a florist and the other in sales & marketing which brought me to Virginia where I met Gary. We'd like to share how God has woven our lives together...

I was raised in a Ukrainian Catholic Church, which tends to be very archaic. When I was young, I didn't appreciate the deep traditions. As a rebellious 18 or 19 year old, I explored the Roman Catholic Church where Fr. Lou Brown was the associate pastor.

Twenty-two years ago Gary and I met and decided to get married. Gary was a Baptist stationed aboard the USS Nimitz, and the new Catholic Chaplain just coming aboard was... Fr. Lou Brown! Fr. Brown helped Gary through the Catholic annulment process and RCIA while they were on a six-month deployment. When the ship pulled into Washington State, Gary surprised me with the news that he was coming into full communion with the Catholic Church at Easter sunrise service on the flight deck aboard USS Nimitz.

Much has happened since that time. We have both lost our parents, and the homes where we were raised have been sold. My only brother lives in Brewerton, NY; Gary's siblings live in Atlanta and Shreveport. Gary and I have lots of cousins all over the country.

We feel blessed to have found the property in Chuckey where we are building our "forever" home. When you are in the military and move every three years you always talk about your "forever" house. Well, whenever I hear Fr. John say "Good Blessed Morning to You" I feel like God is saying you have followed the right path to make your "forever HOME". Gary and I both hope to be active members of Notre Dame.

Consumer Fraud Presentation

By Alma Vazquez

On January 18, the Catholic Charities office of Immigrant Services in partnership with Legal Aid presented "consumer fraud" at Notre Dame. Attorney Douglas Payne from W. Irish Street in Greeneville was present. We talked about buying used or rented items, too good to be true deals, check cashing stores, phone sales, etc. The Hispanic community is an easy target for fraud because most people do not read English. Some of us do and still do not understand what is in the contract! So just imagine reading English as a Second Language person. About 20 people attended, and the food was sponsored by Monterrey and Chihuahua Restaurants.