

# St. Dominic's Alumni Association

Vol. 11

Winter/Spring, 2014



St. Dominic Convent, EST. 1878 ~ Holy Rosary Chapel, EST. 1888 ~ St. Joseph Home, EST. 1880 Photo: John Rossi

Two days into its 135th year - November 5, 1878 - November 7, 2013 - the demolition of St. Joseph Building, Holy Rosary Chapel, and the original Convent began. Our dormitory building had been declared uninhabitable because of mold, and the prohibitive cost of correcting this problem necessitated the painful decision by the Sisters to tear down the building. Sadly, because of the chapel's original construction, it and the convent building had to come down as well. For many years, countless young women came to St. Dominic's to begin their religious life as Sisters in those very buildings, and though their numbers have declined, to those who remain, we offer our prayers in hopes they will bring you comfort.

## - A Child -

A child is a vehicle -  
through someone else's eyes  
he sees his image.

His nakedness is clothed  
his eyes see shadows  
his heart feels the meaning of pain  
his fingers hunger to clasp  
others in friendship

He takes shadowy steps  
toward the future  
he will be molded by our minds.

Be gentle, children suffer for us.

By Gypsy

# Announcements

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## Looking for:

- **The attention of all Veterans, or a family member of a Veteran**, to send us a photo of yourself in uniform. Include the era you served (WW II, Korea, etc.), length and dates (enlistment and departure), branch of your service and, if you would like to, a current photo of you and your family. For a deceased Veteran, please include date of death and if death was combat related. Mail or e-mail your photos to the Alumni Association (see page 7 for addresses below) by August 31, 2014. This date provides enough time for you to gather your photos while planning moves forward for the Fall/Winter, 2014 issue.
- **Stories, poems and verse**  
Submissions of short bios of *What Has Become of...* Your story can be presented in any format and can include then-and-now pictures. If you send hard copies of your photos and want them returned, please mark them **RETURN**. Poems and verse, whether your own writings or a favorite collected through the years, are welcomed.
- Submissions of memories. Keep in mind we will always honor your request to print your story anonymously. Just include a note to that affect.
- Shout-outs of former friends, classmates, dorm/cottage mates.
- Announcements, congratulations, etc.
- Feedback on what you would like to see and read in your *Newsletter*, as well as feedback on what you have read.

## Thank you...

- ...to the many who called or sent a note to comment on *One Boy's Cottage Life*, a story that appeared in our Winter/Spring, 2013 *Newsletter*. "Change the names and era, and it's my story", more than one caller said. Another said, "Mr. Anonymous had me laughing when he wrote about the not-so-secret runaway plans he and a few friends cooked up. As it was, a generation later we kids weren't any wiser: My friend also had a 'cousin' we could stay with if we ran away. We did, we got caught, and for the same reason: we were color-blind. Today we appreciate the Sisters". Words of compassion and hope for Mr. Anonymous and his siblings reuniting were frequently expressed. One writer, who experienced cottage life somewhat differently, wondered if Mr. Anonymous and he had been in the same cottage. And of course, more than a few asked, "Who is Mr. Anonymous?" Sorry.
- ..., on behalf of Sister Pat Horan, to those of you who responded to her request "to make a few jottings of our years while at St. Dominic's" for the Sister's written history of the *Founding Mission of St. Dominic's Home by Sr. Mary Ann Sammon in 1878*. (See Page 7 to find out how you too can participate in Project Memory)
- ...to our poem contributors: **Gypsy Caruso** (formerly Francis Gervasi), **Elizabeth Ali DeLeonardo**, and **Pamela Mason DiMaio**
- ...to **Peter Borgia**, **Carmen J. Gonzalez**, and the **Sisters of St. Dominic's** for the many photographs they so generously shared with the Association.
- to **Nuisance** (you know who you are), who donated the funds for the added cost of printing our newsletter in color.

## Obituaries

- **Deborah Caban Davis** Class of '66, Debbie died January 26, 2014 in Hazelton, PA. She is survived by her sisters, Socorro, Belinda, Laura, and Renee; brothers, Pedro and Roberto; daughter, Cherie; son Charles, Jr.; three grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews. Debbie will be missed by her friends from St. Dominic's.
- **Gloria Casazzio Servidio** Class of '41, notification of Gloria's death on November 12, 2012 came in a note form her family.
- **William "Billy" Yackel** Class of '49, Billy died June 21, 2013 in Queens. In addition to his brother Howie, Class of '55, Billy is survived by his brother George, and sister, Irene.
- **Sr. Timothy Cunningham** died April 11, 2013.
- Pray for: Barbara Pulliza Berry; Catherine Whalen Conley; Mary Melandez Duzant; Peggy Bejcek Lofstrom
- Pray for all deceased Convent Kids and their families. Pray for the many who are fighting illnesses, and for those struggling with life's challenges. Pray for all the sisters, priests, and laypeople who mothered, educated, and cared for us. Pray for all families who have lost loved ones while serving their country.

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### St. Dominic's Alumni Association Officers:

David MacMillan, Chair ♦ Grace Koklas Starkey, Vice Chair ♦ Jeannette Borgia Earl, Treasurer ♦ Emilia (Amy) Ali, Secretary

**Our mission:** To rekindle old friendships to make new ones.



## Michael,

and the love of a mother for her son,  
as seen through the eyes of his aunt.

His voice was sweet and gentle,  
but he murmured not a word;  
His song a little strange,  
his walk sometimes absurd;

He prodded me to feed him,  
cause he couldn't hold his cup;  
His braces were so heavy,  
though the crutches held him up;

Watching him grow up,  
underneath this dreadful cloud;  
The day he took that first step,  
I knew that he was proud.

What courage has this special child,  
what patience to endure;  
This burden he must carry,  
for which there is no cure;

What is this strange affliction,  
that has trapped my little boy;  
How can I free his spirit,  
bring his life a little joy;

Can I somehow make it easy,  
can I show you that I care;  
Will you know I'll always love you,  
even when I am not there;

I can only stand beside you,  
lend a hand along the way;  
And hope that with a gentle hug,  
I brighten up your day

Elizabeth Ali De Leonardo

From left: Margaret Moore Morris,  
Roberto Rivera, Tyrone Ludwig,  
Patricia Moore Ranney, Hector Malave,  
Pamela Mason DiMaio



From left: Margaret Moore Morris,  
Carmen J. Gonzalez, Belinda Caban

From Right: Renee Caban and her sister Laura



Patricia Moore Ranney, Roberto Rivera,  
Hector Malave, Sr. Francis, Tyrone Ludwig,  
John Oppenheimer

Peter Borgia and  
Hector Malave



Seated from left: Amy Ali, Jerry Mazzella, husband of Patti Borgia;  
Phyllis Borgia, wife of Peter Borgia; Peggy Alvarez, and far right is  
Grace Morris, daughter of Margaret Moore Morris. Rear left:  
Patti Borgia Mazzella, Jeannette Borgia Earl

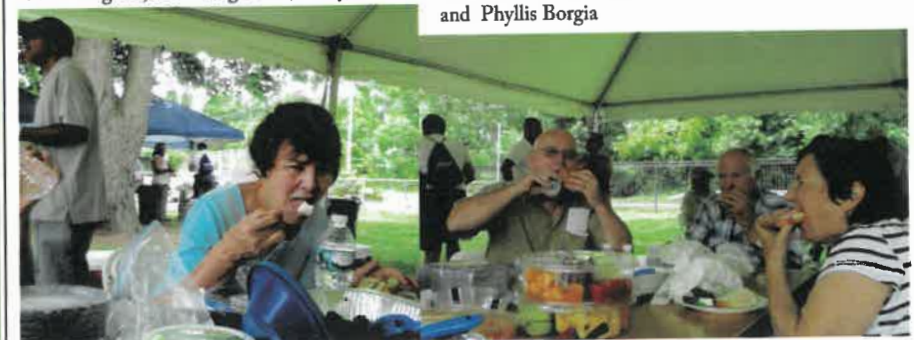


Phyllis Borgia,  
Patti Borgia Mazzella,  
Grace Morris



Carmen J. Gonzales and Patricia Moore Ranney

Mmmm good; Mmmm good..., so say, from left: Janet Orlandi Fleming, Peter Borgia, Jerry Mazzella,  
and Phyllis Borgia





## Our Sisters, Our Friends by Pamela Mason DiMaio

When we were in your charge, you stood in the place of our mothers,  
But you were closer in age to sisters than mothers.  
You were young, untried, wet behind the ears...  
Given the enormous responsibility of not one, two, or three children –  
You were in charge of thirty-one, thirty two or thirty-three children.

We were broken children,  
children who acted out,  
children who didn't speak.  
Our homes were chaotic,  
unstable  
even dangerous.

Our parents could not care for us and only God knows their suffering.  
You offered us sanctuary, but we, with our small minds and understanding,  
Counted you as enemies.

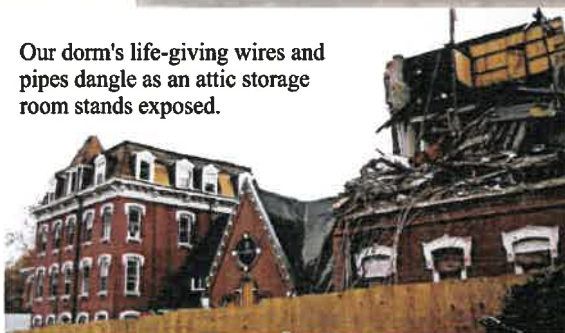
Nevertheless.....

You taught us our numbers.  
You taught us how to read.  
You taught us to sew and cook and work with wood.  
You taught us to swim and perform synchronized swimming routines.  
You taught us to play "The Bells of St. Mary" as we marched in parades.

We climbed in the orchard when the trees were laden with apples.  
We kissed petals that fluttered to the ground as we walked in May processions to crown Mary.  
We prayed in the chapel and listened as you sang.  
We organized our cubbyholes with Sunday clothes, school clothes and play clothes.  
We lined up under the awning in front of the refectory for three squares.  
Daily you did a hundred parenting chores for us because our mothers and father could not.

How many of us survived and thrived because of the discipline and care you gave us?  
How many of us continue to return to St. Dominic's as adults?  
How many of us are blessed to count sisters as friends today?

Our dorm's life-giving wires and  
pipes dangle as an attic storage  
room stands exposed.



Memories from our dorm: ornate tin ceiling,  
painted foundation, pieces of old "true-cut"

A last, final tribute to our selfless Caregivers'  
giving and protection.



Just before the final blow fells our home. To the  
right was the Company Yard.



Safely removed from a  
and the Celtic cross lie



Workers preparing for the day we never dreamed of.



Your children flourish. Hallowed halls going to dust  
– our Caregiver rest – our eternal prayers and thanks.



2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors – where we played, learned, and slept.



Final blow to our dorms – “From dust to dust.”



Once our entry into the warmth of our childhood home.



Next, Holy Rosary Chapel. A trinity of wood windows falls to mingle in the dust, but...



... the light of God's Trinity will shine forever though darkness envelopes its strength.



Our Caregiver's home: A window from the original Convent's 4<sup>th</sup> floor topples.

The marble altar, in all its magnificence, has been donated to a church in dire need in Upstate New York



Stained glass windows from Holy Rosary Chapel – the novitiate – now hang throughout the Convent.

Photo captions: Peter Borgia



Photos: jbc, 2013

From right: Enrique Pizarro, Ana Pizarro Bracero and husband Jose Bracero looking over Ana's shoulder; Iris Gonzalez Breiner, Rocky Bracero, son of Ana and Jose



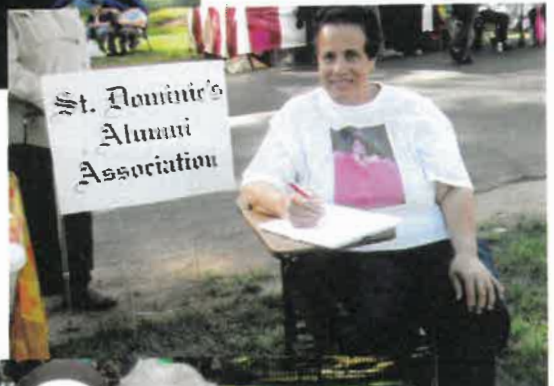
**Michael Candel and wife Rebecca**



David Ramirez and wife Janice



Carmen J. Gonzalez



Sr.Kathleen with Peggy Bejcek Lofstrom



David Macmillan, Bob Moore, Mike Escobar



Marianne Gonzalez, sister of Peter, Patti and Jeannette Borgia;  
Liberty Matos Levinowitz, Ana Pizarro Bracero, Iris Gonzalez Breiner.  
Seated: Peggy Bejcek Lofstrom holding photo of her mother

## Mark Your Calendars

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*Saturday, July 27<sup>th</sup>*  
*30<sup>th</sup> Annual Alumni Picnic*  
*12 noon to 6:00 PM*

*Saturday, September 27th*  
*64th Annual Fall Festival*  
*10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.*

# Announcements

## Project Memories

**“When our experiences are acknowledged, we are no longer invisible, we are validated”.**

The Sisters maintain an archive, and one segment of that archive is the Sister's written history of the **FOUNDING MISSION OF ST. DOMINIC HOME** by **SR. MARY ANN SAMMON in 1878**. Because this written history had little, if any contributions from those for whom the Home was founded, and in an effort to correct this, **Project Memories** was begun by the Sisters during last September's Fall Festival. Throughout the day, a book was available on the Alumni table for former residents of the Home to come by and, to quote Sr. Pat, “make a few jottings of your years at St. Dominic's”. At the close of the Festival everyone was invited to evening mass, and there, during the Offertory, David MacMillan brought the *Memories* book and its “jottings” to the altar to be ritualized and become part of the Sister's written history. *Memories* is an ongoing project, and Sr. Pat is hopeful that those who have yet to submit their “jottings” will consider doing so. In reality, we, as former residents of the Home, will always be tied to the Sister's of St. Dominic's, so who better to tell our stories than us.

Your writings can include the years you were at St. Dominic's, the names of any siblings who were at St. Dominic's, your dormitory or cottage Sister, and if you recall, your teachers and social workers. Photos of then-and-now will add to the depth of the archives; and remember, your memories can be sent anonymously.

Some thoughts on writing: Was there a teacher who inspired you to read? Another to write creatively? Was it at St. Dominic's where you discovered the fun of being in a play or the joy of classical music? Perhaps a social worker or coach recognized your potential in something and encouraged you to keep at it, work hard and not give up? There was shop; band; scouting; Latin drills as you trained to be an altar boy. There were the classrooms; cottages; dormitories; group homes, the refectory; the girl's plot; the boy's field; the play hall; the swimming pool. What were you caught doing? Even better, what didn't you get caught doing? These are just some of the places where the seeds of our memories of St. Dominic's Home sprouted. We join Sr. Pat in asking you “to look into your mind and heart and make a few jottings of your years at St. Dominic's.”

Reminiscences can be sent to: **Sr. Pat Horan, O.P. St. Dominic's Convent 496 Western Highway Blauvelt, NY 10913-2097**. Sr.'s e-mail address is [horanpat33@gmail.com](mailto:horanpat33@gmail.com)

- **30<sup>th</sup> Alumni Picnic** will be held **Saturday, July 26, 2014**, and we anticipate a nice turnout for this milestone. There are large grills on site, and much sharing of the many and varied foods brought from home. Music, games, and door prizes add to the fun of reconnecting with old friends while making new ones. Pack a picnic basket and your family, and gather with us.
- Because of space, **OUR MEMBERSHIP** will not appear in this issue. It will next print in our Fall/Winter, 2014 issue. Thank you for your understanding.

## Reminders:

- To contact us to share a story, photo, change your address (include your apartment number), or have an inquiry, write **St. Dominic's Alumni Association PO Box 246 Strasburg, PA 17579-0246**  
**Ph# 717-653-8973** [sdalum@hotmail.com](mailto:sdalum@hotmail.com)
- Mark your calendars: Our **30<sup>th</sup> Alumni Picnic** will take place **Saturday, July 26, 2014**; and the **64<sup>th</sup> Annual Fall Festival** will be held **Saturday, September 27, 2014**.

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## Congratulations to:

Lydia Matos Cruz and Joseph Olano on their recent engagement. The wedding will take place in 2015



*If you have something to do,  
someone to love,  
and something to hope for,  
every day becomes a celebration.*



**Our Mission: To rekindle old friendships to make new ones.**

## Poems

Author Unknown

Poems are often hard to recognize  
We don't always see them with the writer's eyes.  
But once they are identified  
We must acknowledge the writer's pride.

Sometimes they tell of past years  
And occasionally bring some tears.  
Then there is talk of future years,  
With lots of plans and perhaps some fears.

But all that has to be put aside  
After all, we're just along for the ride.  
The roads we take are not always right  
And getting lost is part of the flight.

The people met and events on the way  
Whether good or bad, they never go away.  
The memories are there, like gems in a vault  
And they bring out life's flavor, just like salt.

Eventually we come to the end of the road  
In today's vernacular, we're in another mode.  
It will be beautiful with a great rolling pasture  
And we'll all meet on the green grass of the Master.