

Message from the Directors

This newsletter adopted the new delivery format in May 2007. In the past 10 months, we have been working hard to improve the quality and to enrich the content. We are lucky that we can still maintain our course until now.

Besides receiving support from members of our Chapter, we are fortunate to see support from fellow La Sallians not living in Edmonton. Readership is on the rise. Subscribers to the newsletter distribution list are growing in number. This is encouraging reflecting the fact that the "newsletter reform" is taking the right course and endorsed by the La Sallian community.

While this is a newsletter originated from the Edmonton Chapter, it is designed to serve the La Sallian community at large. As part of ongoing improvement, we welcome your suggestions or constructive criticisms. Please make this newsletter your own. Whether you love or hate it, treat it as your child whom you want to be good at the end.

As the newsletter has grown to this stage, we would like to see it last longer. We therefore urge every reader to step up and do whatever you can, within your ability, to help make this dream come true. The following is a list of actions that you may take to help:

- Subscribe to the newsletter distribution list, if you have not done so, to make sure that you are receiving this newsletter the moment it is published
- Help spread the word and forward a copy of this newsletter to your friends and urge them to subscribe
- Contribute to the newsletter by writing an article, responding to someone's writing, reporting an event of fellow La Sallians or just send in some pictures
- Suggest ways to improve it such as new style, new layout, new sections

If you have contributions, suggestions or comments, please send it to the editor via email [editor at lscobaedm.org](mailto:editor@lscobaedm.org)

Looking forward to hearing from you.

To subscribe, please visit <http://www.lscoba-edm.ab.ca/newsletters.shtml>.

Can you spare one night?

The annual general meeting and Spring Dinner of the Edmonton Chapter will be held on Saturday April 12 at Jumbo Restaurant (萬豪海鮮大酒家). The board of directors is urging you to bring your family to the event and have fun with fellow La Sallians that night. Please email [bod at lscobaedm.org](mailto:bod@lscobaedm.org) to let us know how many seats should be reserved for you.

We understand that most of you are busy but we hope that you can spare just one night in a year for this annual event. Would you mind to do that?

Reminders

Dim Sum Gathering

Date first Friday of every month
Time starting at noon
Venue Century Palace Restaurant
龍廷大酒樓

The next two gatherings will be on

- March 7, 2008
- April 4, 2008

Upcoming

Directors' Meeting

Date: March 10, 2008
Time: starting 6:30pm
Venue: Finnagan's Bar, Bistro
& Billiards

Please join us for dinner

Annual General Meeting &
Spring Dinner

Date: April 12, 2008
Venue: Jumbo Restaurant
萬豪海鮮大酒家
Time: 6:00pm AGM
7:00pm Dinner

Please mark you calendar!

What is new?

Starting from the February issue, this newsletter features a special column named "Memory Lane"

Every month, one member of the LaSallian community will contribute an article with his memory of his time in La Salle.

We welcome everyone to send in his article via email to

[editor at lscobaedm.org](mailto:editor@lscobaedm.org)

Members' Activities



Visiting California

Nick Domingo (63) has been traveling a lot recently with his sweet heart with footprint all over the world.

He just returned from a trip to the sunshine state. There he met with fellow La Sallians and the couple was treated with some good stuff in a Chinese restaurant by Bryan Lee (88) (in black shirt), the President of the Southern California Chapter, and some of their members.

Watch your waist, Nick!

Super Bowl Party

February 3 is the day for the Super Bowl Championship game. A group of old boys in Edmonton gather together in Finnagan's to watch the game and enjoy good drink and delicious food.

The game is a good one to watch. Thanks to Mike's special effort, we have a memorable experience of eating and drinking.

What about a sip of "tea of the Hong Kong style" (港式奶茶) and mouthful of Macau egg rolls (澳門蛋卷)? Thanks Mike!



Reader's Response to William's Home Coming

William Lai (61) has written an article on his first home coming in 44 years. We receive some feedbacks and are glad that Francis Kan (66) has given his consent to publish his feedback in this issue. Williams' response to Francis will appear in the next newsletter.

Editor

I read with interest William Lai's article. Please thank William for sharing his feelings about our school. I felt exactly the same when I last had a chance to speak to the teachers and students at La Salle in the last couple of years.

I was also surprised that Cantonese was used in many formal La Salle occasions. Things are a little better when an English speaking Brother is present.

I was led to believe that trends are very similar in other secondary schools - William's experience at Belilios, Maryknoll and Pui Ching seemed to prove otherwise.

Like William, I am not snobbish. I just feel that the English-speaking environment we experience when we were in La Salle gave us a tremendous advantage later in life, and I wish the boys now at La Salle can enjoy the same. It is very disheartening to find that Cantonese is now the chief instruction language used even in Form 6 and 7 on subjects like physics and mathematics at La Salle.

On the other hand, I am happy to report that most of the Form 6 boys I was able to talk to (with no teachers or parents present) were very bright and well adjusted. Unlike boys of our generation, most of the current boys I met are from smaller families (mostly single-child). They are likely to have traveled more, and have been exposed to more good things in life, than we, when we were at the same age. In terms of the quality of the boys at La Salle right now, we may not have to worry too much

And to be fair to the LSC of today, we should understand that things are different. In our time, La Salle took on many non-Chinese boys. As a result, we had to speak English at school almost by necessity. (We had to fight in English with our classmates.) Of course the school encouraged English too. But now, non-Chinese students can choose to go to "International Schools", which are very common in Hong Kong. La Salle is now almost 100% Chinese.

So when they are all Cantonese in class, and when the teachers are not fluent in English themselves, Cantonese becomes the teaching medium. However, I did join a Form 3 class discussion where there was an Indian boy (who was also the prefect), and everyone did try to make an effort to conduct the conversation in English.

Like William, I have lived in Canada for a long time. Sometimes I wonder if we are overly critical. It may be the "wish iron were steel" (恨鐵不成鋼) mentality. But we all want La Salle to do well.

The question remains: what can we, as old boys, do to help?

Let the discussion continue.

Everly
Kan Man Fai (1966)

Spring Dinner in San Francisco



The LSCOPA San Francisco / Bay Area Chapter held its annual Spring Dinner on February 16, 2008 at ABC Seafood Restaurant in Milpitas, California. Over 60 old boys and their families participated in the event, which also celebrated the School's 75th Anniversary.

We also had out of town guests from Southern California, Omaha (NE) and New York / New Jersey. The highlight of the evening was the trivia game that we played. All the questions were related to the history of LSC and LSPS. Some of them were quite tricky. The best table only answered 11 out of a total of 15 questions. They sure brought back a lot of fond memories, especially for old boys from the 60's and 70's.

During the dinner, we displayed and sold a number of the 75th Anniversary souvenir items that were brought back from Hong Kong. The most popular items were Mark Huang's "Sons of La Salle Everyone - A History of La Salle College and Primary School, 1932 - 2007" and the old boys' ties. We also mentioned the Global Re-union to be hosted by the New York / New Jersey Chapter on the July 4th weekend. Brochures for the event were distributed to the interested old boys. It was a fun and enjoyable evening for everyone. Especially for the lucky ones that took home prizes from the lucky draw.

Ephrem Fung 76'

President

LSCOPA San Francisco / Bay Area Chapter



Invitation from the New York Chapter

Happy New Year! On behalf of the New York / East Coast Chapter, I am pleased to inform you that our registration website for the 2008 Global Reunion and World Conference (www.nyiscoba.org) is finally ready to serve the Old Boys communities. Please kindly pass the news to members of your chapter. We are very excited for the opportunity to be your host and will as always, doing our best to meet your expectations.

Having said that, this is our first time playing host globally so there will be a learning curve waiting for us. Therefore, as you take the first step (registration) on your road to the July Reunion, your patience and understanding will be deeply appreciated for any inconvenience that we might have created. The event program and the reunion website are the results from a group of committed and hardworking chapter members, the main reason they are doing this is because they want everyone's participation, therefore, to join us in July is surely the best way to support us.

Have a good day and see you all soon!

Best Regards,

Peter Lai (67)

President, New York/East Coast Chapter

Note: Many members in Edmonton have registered to take advantage of the early bird price discount. Come join us to form the largest convoy ever from Edmonton to the Global Reunion.

Business Lessons

This series of 6 business lessons is supplied by Dewy Ip (1971)

Lesson 2:

A priest offered a Nun a lift.

She got in and crossed her legs, forcing her gown to reveal a leg.

The priest nearly had an accident.

After controlling the car, he stealthily slid his hand up her leg.

The nun said, 'Father, remember Psalm 129?'

The priest removed his hand. But, changing gears, he let his hand slide up her leg again.

The nun once again said, 'Father, remember Psalm 129?'

The priest apologized 'Sorry sister but the flesh is weak.'

Arriving at the convent, the nun sighed heavily and went on her way.

On his arrival at the church, the priest rushed to look up Psalm 129. It said, 'Go forth and seek, further up, you will find glory.'

Moral of the story:

If you are not well informed in your job, you might miss a great opportunity.

Memory Lane

LSC: Memories Are Made of This (Dean Martin 1955):
Musings of an Old Boy from
The land of the silver birch and home of the beaver...
Plus fossils and dinosaurs,
And Province of *River of No Return* and *Brokeback Mountain* fame,
And a city where Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt lined up
For Chinese food in the world's largest shopping mall,
Or, just call it Oil Country

William Lai (1961)

Lunch-time religion

At the Perth Street campus, the lunch hour was usually a fairly quiet period. Sometimes we would go explore the hills at the back of school just beyond a piece of gravel ground that was passed off as a football field. Sometimes we would just hang out somewhere on the school grounds proper. If Bro Felix, the Principal, happened along and saw you loitering around seemingly doing nothing useful, he would strongly suggest that you go to the school chapel and partake in the recital of the Rosary by joining in with an ever-present crowd of fervent, lunch-time Rosary faithfuls. Yours truly was at the receiving end of this suggestion a few times. Yes, I know the Rosary well.

The *Hail Mary* and the *Our Father* and other prayers, of course, were said on many other occasions than just at Bro Felix's lunch-time urgings. But the lunch prayers did add to the tally and, after chalking up a million and half times of *Hail Mary* and the *Our Father*, they become part of you, much like your arms and legs. It's instant and complete recall of the entire verse even after decades of having nothing to do with Mary or Our Father.

The Air That I Breathe (Hollies, 1974)

In the mid-Forms, we had separate catechism and Bible classes. One year, a certain Bro was our Bible teacher. He would have us mark out lines, paragraphs and sections of the New Testament, and the homework was to learn the designated segments by heart, to be tested for recitation the next Bible class. If you failed to recall the marked passages verbatim without aid, you would be asked to stand in a line-up in front of the class, or sometimes outside the classroom. During class, he would also walk around to the students' desks and peer over their shoulders closely as he emphasized a teaching point he was making. He gave us, or at least me, a personal meaning of the phrase "breathing down your neck". I won't describe the air that I breathed then, but suffice it to say that I learnt my Bible well. This Brother was, of course, not the only Bible teacher we had through the years. Other teachers also encouraged the learning of the Bible by heart to some extent, but perhaps in less of a demonstrative fashion.

Many years later, I would surprise unsuspecting friends and professional colleagues with Biblical quotes apropos to the occasion. People were amazed that I, normally not a religious-looking sort in adult life, could blurt out passages from the Bible spontaneously as if I were a preacher. That sometimes generated much interest from my associates and livened up social occasions. I have this Brother and other Bible teachers to thank for that.

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

Believe it or not, I was a choir boy at La Salle Primary School which was housed at Perth Street at the time. The year was 1954 and we were taught to sing all the Christmas carols. I had known the carols before, but this time we were being trained to sing them in a choir for a road show. We had many practices to learn all the lyrics by heart. The practice sessions were enjoyable breaks from the routines of the school.

The road show took the choir a-caroling to the patients of various hospitals. One of the hospitals we visited was the British Military Hospital, aka La Salle College before it was returned to its rightful owners. The choir then had an exclusive preview of the Dome and its interiors before it became La Salle College again. The visit to what was then called 33rd Hospital was recorded in pictures. One of the pictures of this visit appears on page 131 in Mark Huang's Sons of La Salle Everyone. If I am not mistaken, this picture came from my collection. Challenge for the reader: find me in the picture.

The choir training to sing the carols made such a mark on me that I would hark back to that time every Christmas since then whenever I hear the carols being sung in concerts or played on radio.

I'm a Believer (Monkees 1966).....Or not

Humour and agony aside, the religious schooling at La Salle became an integral part of an intellectual background that later on would provide an insightful perspective with which the world would be viewed. I have found that the religious knowledge learnt at La Salle has helped in a better understanding of world affairs; in enhancing the appreciation of cultures, literature and history; in establishing rapport with colleagues and clients of various faiths; in evaluating different belief systems; and in generally having a satisfying quality of intellectual life. One does not have to be a religious practitioner, or even a believer, to benefit from and be enriched by a religious education. La Salle College had done that for me. Note that I am referring to only the religious education that I received at LSC.

Of Irish Brothers and Irish coffee

A couple of blocks from the Dome, at the corner of Waterloo Road and Prince Edward Road (or was it Boundary Street?), there was a coffee shop, called The Coffee House. A few friends and I used to go there from time to time. The Irish coffee in that shop was incomparable. We would go there after school but sometimes we would skip class and spend (no, not waste) a little bit of our youth sipping laced coffee there. We thought we would, for a while at least, escape from the watchful eyes of the Bros, many of whom were Irish, only to be hooked by Irish coffee. I still think that Coffee House made the best Irish coffee I have ever tasted, and I have tried it in many places in my travels. Even to this day, whenever I see Irish coffee in restaurant menus, my mind goes back to the "real" Irish coffee that we had at that coffee shop against which the present Irish coffee being served to me would be judged.

Looking back, I am glad that the strongest substance we ever took was Irish coffee. While we belonged to the same generation, we never became flower children.

Standing on the corner, watching all the girls go by....(The Four Lads, 1956)

After coffee and sometimes after school, we would actualize the lyrics of this 1956 Four Lads hit, by standing on the corner of Waterloo and Prince Edward Roads and watching all the girls go by. The girls, of course, were Maryknoll

girls. Sometimes, it was more strategic to position oneself across the street where the St Teresa's Church was and still is. Those were the days before any of the flyovers were built and you had a better view of pedestrian movements and an easier way of crossing the street. Some of us advanced beyond the watching stage and actually acquired Maryknoll girlfriends. But that's another story, or stories.

A few years after leaving LSC, I was married at St Teresa's Church. No, she was not a Maryknoll girl. The girl-watching platform had moved to the University of Hong Kong by then. Belilios won out that time. Forty years on and two sons later, it's still going strong.

They will always sing this song.....but with which word?

Did you know that Bro Felix had wanted to change a word in the school song? The word was "minding" in "She would have us ever minding, That above is our true home". He believed that the use of "minding" in this context was a malapropism. He said the correct word should be "mindful". The reason was that "mindful" meant bearing in mind, whereas "minding" could mean to be leery of something that one wants to avoid, as in the ad nauseum warning to "mind the gap" in the HK MTR. The intent of the two lines in question was that "she" wanted us to bear in mind that the "above" is our true home; she did not want us to be apprehensive of the fact that our true home is above. Bro Felix actually had us singing "mindful" for a while. But I guess the idea did not catch on in the long run.

Though his wish to change the wording did not hold, what Bro Felix taught us was the need to be aware of the subtleties and nuances of the words we used if we wanted to master the language and express ourselves clearly and accurately.

Baywatch without the babes

La Salle College has always been noted for her outstanding athleticism. We would all aspire to be an LSC athletic star at some point. But unfortunately for me, I had neither the talent nor the physical attributes to satisfy this aspiration. But I did know how to swim from a young age. My only hope was to make something of this inclination. I found it in life-saving.

I began life-saving training after joining the scouts. We trained to obtain life-guarding qualifications from the Royal Life Saving Society. There were, and still are, I believe, progressive levels of life-saving qualifications and we would train hard for a higher level every year. While I did not have the muscular prowess to swim fast in competition, I could swim long. I remember going to the swimming pavilions at Lai Chi Kok. These pavilions were constructed out of wood and bamboo and consisted of two prongs protruding from the rocky beaches to form what looked like swimming pools between the two protrusions. We would swim innumerable laps in these "pools", as a requirement of the life-saving exams was to be able to swim in certain styles for certain distances within certain time limits. Another requirement was to swim fully clothed for a certain distance and then take off all street clothing in water without submerging one's head. Before or after these swims, we would practise life-saving techniques either in water or on land. Sometimes we would train on beaches where we would swim from beach to beach and then swim back to the originating beach (because that's where our clothes were). I surprised myself when I actually was able to advance to the then highest level of life-saving qualifications, the Distinction Award. I even became a life-saving instructor. As far as the swimming went, I was never an aquatic star, of course; but I did swim across the harbour once when the cross-harbour race was an annual event. I was also in a marathon swim at least once. I can't recall the exact route of this marathon, though I still have the medal marking this participation.

Apart from training, the LSC life-saving team was tasked to be the lifeguards at various public and private social events (no pay, just a free lunch). I remember going on some fancy yachts on some of these tours of duty, which was kind of a treat. My life-saving team-mates and I had sat in life-guard stands on beaches watching the swimming crowd

frolicking in the water, but I could not recall anyone of us ever being approached by half-naked women as suggested would be the case by the Baywatch series.

For me, what all this life-saving and water training did was not so much the actual technical aspects of life-saving as the life-skills they imparted. The training had helped the build-up of such qualities as: perseverance, tenacity, endurance, and a certain "stick-to-it-iveness". To this training at LSC, I attribute my later stamina that allowed me to cope with and persist in difficult situations of various sorts, such as working extraordinarily long hours without any pause, keeping cool under extreme stress, remaining steadfast in the face of adversity, sitting through long and boring professional conferences where everybody else would clamour for a break or end, or shoveling knee-deep snow in -30C weather, etc.

I did not encounter any occasion to use my life-saving skills as a member of the LSC life-guards. But the habit of scanning the surroundings whenever and wherever there are swimmers around never left me. This vigilance finally paid off many years later when I spotted a swimmer in distress in a pool party, which nobody else noticed, and I got him out of the pool.

Be Prepared..You had a good home and you left (first line of The 17th Chant)

I had been a member of the 17th Kowloon Scout Group since I entered La Salle, first as a Cub and then advancing to the Seniors. In conjunction with the La Salle education, I think scouting in the 17th helped to shape my adolescent and young adult development. I can recall many of the scouting activities that we did; the outings, camping and singing around a campfire, carrying a rucksack almost equal to my body weight, sleeping on nothing more than a ground sheet (and occasionally without), courses to qualify for badges, marching etc, etc. With some persistence and grittiness, I managed to become a Queen's Scout. I can still remember receiving the Queen's Scout Certificate from the then HK Governor (I think his name was Sir Robert Black) as if it was yesterday.

For me, the scouting participation has had life-long impacts. Apart from the sense of camaraderie akin to the feeling of a "band of brothers", scouting as I experienced it in LSC allowed the development of such qualities as discipline, loyalty, respect, honesty, integrity, and a venturesome spirit. These traits were to become part of the personality make-up and have served me well. And, the skills that I learned as scout are still useful today, whether the activity involves trekking in the Canadian Rockies, felling an unwanted tree in the backyard, handing someone a pair of scissors, or tying down some canopy in the fierce prairie wind, just to cite a few examples.

*"Nails and Tacks,
Rails and Cracks
La Salle Scouts are
Crackerjacks,
Yeah! 17th."*

RIP

While I look back on my scouting days with fondness and pleasant memories, we did experience a tragedy. A very well-liked and competent patrol leader, Joseph Kho, died in a scouting accident. I was not present, but I was told that he was somehow swept down a torrential stream. We were all extremely saddened by this loss which, I believe, was the first and only traumatic event related to scouting that I and my 17th cohort had experienced. For me personally, it was also my very first experience of a death of someone I knew, family members included. Though we were contemporaries, he was ahead of me in terms of achievements in academics and scouting, and he had my utmost respect. Had he lived, he would have been a stalwart in any field of endeavour that he would have chosen. His passing was a tremendous loss for all of us. I still remember going to his funeral and his tearful mother hugging each one of us saying that we were all

now her sons. We were all very touched by this gesture and learnt something about grieving. Rest in peace, Joseph, my friend; we still remember you.

Tipperary... to... My Old Kentucky Home... via... Land of the Silver Birch

Amongst the many enjoyable scouting activities was the sing-song sessions either in weekly meetings or when on outings. Gathering around the campfire after dinner on camping trips was something we all looked forward to after a long day's scouting field craft. *Land of the Silver Birch* happened to be one of my favourites. Little did I know at the time that I was singing about my future adopted country. Many of these tunes are folk songs from different lands. Through these songs and the singing sessions, we were in effect exposed to the various cultures and their folklores. Despite the fact that some of these songs would be considered politically incorrect in today's standards, this exposure to the diverse cultures was an education in itself. Travelling through the Deep South in the US many years later, I had the feeling that some things were kind of familiar and Dixieland did not appear to be a strange place at all when I recalled the folk songs I learned as a boy scout. As with the religious education mentioned earlier, these kinds of exposure at La Salle had enabled a better appreciation of cultural diversities and an enhanced adaptive capability.

Another 50 years

The year was 1957. It was the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Boy Scouts movement. I remember going to the Golden Jamboree and singing The Jamboree Song of 1957. A line in the song was: "...And we'll march along together another fifty years". Well, 2007 was the second 50th year, which happened to coincide with the 75th LSC anniversary. It is with some regret that I was not able to see any event or function marking the centennial anniversary of the Boy Scouts on my visit to Hong Kong for the LSC 75th celebrations. Perhaps it was a question of the timing of the visit.

Cadence count

One of the most impressive activities that the 17th had excelled in was the marching drill. I remember going through various marches and drills during weekly scout meetings. We were extremely well trained in marches in different formations and we were especially good at march-passes. In this respect, the 17th was actually not too much different from a military unit. I have since served as a Commissioned Officer in the Canadian army reserves and have seen many drills and marches by Canadian soldiers and formations. Guess what? The 17th's march-pass as I knew it would not pale at all in comparison if the 17th and the Canadian army units were to be placed in the same parade. In fact, the 17th of my day would outperform many of the military units that I have seen. (The march-pass commands of the 17th and the Canadian military are the same as they are both modeled on the British military).

Lest We Forget....From Home Of The Beaver to Jardine's Lookout and Wong Nei Chong Gap

My above comments about the Canadian army related only to the march-pass. As a military organization, the Canadian Forces is second to none in the world in terms of personnel competence, dedication, and operational effectiveness. And, let's not forget the sacrifices that the Canadians made in the defence of Hong Kong. For more information, go to:

http://www.vac.gc.ca/content/history/secondwar/asia/canhk/hongkong_e.pdf