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When life has other plans.

14 TECHNICALLY SPEAKING
The infinitely versatile English degree.

20 ANCHORING HOME PLATE
A young athlete fights demons to win back his future.
The Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center

Why the name? Fifty years ago this June, Joe (Alioto ’65) and I listened to a commencement speaker reflecting on his experience at Saint Mary’s and how it prepared him for life. He talked of studying the Great Books, of Brother Leo, the debates, and the friends he made. He assured us, just as the Brothers had, that we would make it, that something would happen. He was Joe’s father, Joseph L. Alioto, the self-made graduate of this College at the pinnacle of his profession, regarded as the most prominent antitrust attorney in the country. He later became mayor of San Francisco, among his many achievements. He was truly an inspiration.
ALL HAIL GAELS RUGBY
MAY 9 AT 3:01PM ALEX CROOK

What a game!!!!! GAELS ARE SO AWESOME AND CLASSY
MAY 9 AT 3:19PM COLLEEN O’NEIL REILLY

Wow, I just bought the 2014 championship T-shirt. Guess now I need to get the 2015 one, too! Awesome.
2 MAY 10 AT 10:11AM JANET BOTNEN

Congratulations to a team that has overcome the physical and mental hurdles, as well as, the commitment it takes to be a Student Athlete in today’s hyper competitive atmosphere. I am proud to be a Gael and a part of such a great tradition. Gallop Gaels.

CLASS OF 2015 REFLECTIONS

“Do everything you can in college. You’re never going to have one place with this many friends, resources, connections, and opportunities. Also, building blanket forts is the best. It’s good for your soul.”

OLIVER REYES
Theater and Art

“I love that Saint Mary’s is a place where we are encouraged to ask the questions that really matter. As a philosophy major, I will miss all of the discussions that I’ve had with my professors and fellow students.”

PAIGE GILLIARD
Philosophy

“My favorite part of my Saint Mary’s experience has been the professors, staff, and students I have met. It is the friendly waves of hello in the hallways, the sound of laughter filling a classroom, and the encouraging nod of a professor as I pour my heart into our latest text that I will truly miss.”

HOLLAND ENKE
English

“I came to SMC on a whim. But after four years, I can’t imagine spending my undergraduate experience anywhere else. SMC has challenged me, presented me with incredible opportunities to learn and serve, taught me the beauty of actually knowing your professors, and shaped me into the person I am today.”

JENCY JAMES
Environmental Studies

“Saint Mary’s offered me the chance to study and serve across the world in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January 2014. It was here that I fell in love with my students, the country, the Brothers, and the value of the Lasallian core principles. One of my favorite memories was coming in on my last day to teach and my students surprised me by singing songs I had taught them.”

KELSEY WONG
International Area Studies

Men’s Rugby won their second national championship this year. Facebook readers commented.

The Voice is Yours

Read Saint Mary’s magazine online at stmarys-ca.edu/saint-marys-magazine.

Dive into Saint Mary’s social media at stmarys-ca.edu/getsocial.

Eric Gutierrez ’15 from Napa gets a congratulatory hug on his way into Commencement.
English Professor Rosemary Graham listens to Saint Mary’s alumni Melissa Camilleri ’01 and Krissi Sandvik ’88 (right) at a Career Night for English majors in April.

The Saint Mary’s College of California experience inspires learning that lasts a lifetime. The College’s rigorous education engages intellect and spirit while awakening the desire to transform society. We are all learners here—together working to understand and shape the world. For more information: stmarys-ca.edu.

Saint Mary’s magazine is published three times a year. Please send comments to magazine@stmarys-ca.edu, or call (925) 631-4278. Submit status and address changes to info4smc@stmarys-ca.edu and provide a contact number.

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Making good in the high-tech world.

20 Home Plate Anchor
How Saint Mary’s baseball catcher Ian McLoughlin fought back his demons to shine on the field.

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GOTHAM SINGS! When the Saint Mary’s choirs were on tour last July in Riga, Latvia, where they won two gold medals at the World Choir Games, a New York concert producer invited them to perform at Carnegie Hall as part of Gotham Sings!, a showcase of American choirs. After an arduous and exhilarating rehearsal schedule leading up to the event on April 18, the Chamber Singers and Glee Club, under the direction of Professor Julie Ford, filled the premier performing venue with a joyful sound.

Hollywood’s Version
What do such classic coming-of-age movies as The Breakfast Club, Dead Poet’s Society, and Freedom Writers teach us about American culture? The updated and revised second edition of Professor Robert Bulman’s Hollywood Goes to High School, published in March, blends sociological theory and film analysis to challenge how we view social class, education, gender, and adolescence as portrayed in film.

Saddle Up
Horses are known to be healers—animals innately able to connect with humans on a deep, soulful level. SMC’s Kalmanovitz School of Education has been using this concept since January to teach fourth- to sixth-graders in Oakland.

The EQUUS program (Equines and Urban Schools) starts with classroom instruction, taught by KSOE Teachers for Tomorrow candidates. They link horses to math, writing, and environmental learning assignments. Then the students visit Skyline Ranch Equestrian Center, run by Judi Martin on East Bay Regional Park land in the Oakland hills.

“It brings the kids back to nature…brings their feet to the ground,” said Martin.

Barn visits are joyous events where students learn grooming, feeding, and riding skills. For Carl Munck Elementary student Jaden Anderson, it’s a treat to ride a “soft and warm” horse.

“I can’t really do this stuff at home,” said Anderson. “I can’t get out a lot. We don’t really go places with animals.”

“Yo” and “Twinkle” move carefully around the arena as they carry the wide-eyed preteens on their backs.

Laughter and chatter fill the air. They are sounds that remind Martin’s assistant, Jahi Bickham, of his early experience with horses at Skyline Ranch.

“Being young and not knowing how to get to horses but knowing I wanted to be around them…it takes me back. You can see their eyes light up,” said Bickham. —Ginny Prior
Brothers Central

Set back from the busy Via Aurelia, Rome’s 2,000-year-old superhighway, is the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. This complex is the world headquarters where Superior General Robert Schieler, who spoke at this year’s De La Salle Week convocation, and his council oversee 900 schools serving 1 million students in 80 countries.

Do the math and you see that the task is enormous. There are 4,300 Brothers in the world today, compared to some 16,000 in 1965. Brother Robert says this means 97 percent of the teachers, faculty, and staff in Lasallian schools around the world are now lay men and women.

“The Church clearly states that all of us are called to holiness. All of us have a vocation.” The numbers of religious—priests and brothers—is down, he said, but “the holy spirit, to my mind, has risen up.”

The day-to-day operations at the “motherhouse” are not unlike those of a large international corporation. “The archives are kept here, research is undertaken here, there are a lot of meetings and conferences,” said Brother Robert, who works directly with 35 Visitors (heads of their districts) in provinces around the world.

“I have a council, the Visitors have a council, and each unit is pretty much autonomous in how they implement the mission.”

With a guesthouse on the property that can accommodate as many as 200 visitors, lay men and women from around the world come here for formation programs—part of the Christian Brothers’ outreach, which also includes recruitment.

“When John Baptist de La Salle died in 1719, there were just 100 Brothers and about 20 institutions throughout France. De La Salle could never have envisioned the reality today, said Brother Robert. “His dream is being realized—making Christian education available on a global scale. And the charism is being enriched by new people and new ideas.” —Ginny Prior

SEMINAR MADNESS While March Madness—2015’s Division I Men’s Basketball Tournament—unfolded, Saint Mary’s unveiled its own bracket of 32 Seminar readings called Seminar Madness, with the Saint Mary’s community voting for their favorites ranging from Aristotle and Virginia Woolf to Dante and Thomas Jefferson. In the end, Homer’s The Odyssey beat Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail” in the finals by a mere 16 votes. The bracket inspired hundreds to participate, garnering more than 11,000 votes.

SAVVY RESEARCH
Saint Mary’s Library was selected as one of 75 libraries to participate in a nationwide assessment project sponsored by the Association of College and Research Libraries. The SMC team of librarians and faculty weighed the effectiveness of two approaches to teaching information evaluation, research practices, and critical thinking to students in English composition classes. The results will guide library classroom instruction and enhance students’ information literacy, a key factor in academic success. This research also contributes to campuswide assessment initiatives measuring learning outcomes for undergraduate programs.
COMMENTARY

Hot New Releases in Self-Help

- How to Win Friends & Influence Search Engines
  Holden Sway, Ph.D.

- Get Rich in the Sharing Economy
  Ivana B. Flush

- At the End of the Day
  Jess Sayin, M.D.

- The 7 Hashtags of Highly Effective People
  #Hugh Jupsidte

- I'm Famous and You're Not
  Dr. Phil MyEgo

- The Power of Whatever
  Lane Gore

BY GREG CLARK
TOGETHER WE DID IT! Gaels from 28 states, Guam, and Australia made 1,314 donations totaling more than $230,000 on the first-ever #1Day1SMC on March 25. Colette Whitney '11, Regent Odell Johnson Jr. '58, and Trustee Kevin Nagle provided $111,000 in challenge gifts.

AIM HIGH
Stay true to yourself, love what you do, and push beyond your imagination. That was some of the advice offered to Saint Mary’s students in March when Provost Bethami Dobkin moderated a panel of four women working in federal public service in positions ranging from district court judge to Federal Reserve Bank director.

Hosted by the Women’s Leadership Network and the Office of the Provost, the speakers shared their personal stories and how best to pursue a career.

“Once you begin service, you never stop learning,” Dobkin said in her introduction.

The panel included Kandis Westmore, magistrate judge for the U.S. District Court for California’s Northern District (pictured below left); Kathy Moe, risk management deputy director for the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in San Francisco; Jina Choi, San Francisco regional director of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (below right); and Tracy Basinger, group vice president in banking supervision and regulation at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.

Students with little experience should not feel discouraged when applying for jobs, said Westmore, as they have a lot of life experience. —Paige Gilliard ’15

The Next Chapter

When Professor Jacob Lester, 72, retired this spring, he capped a career teaching in the Biology Department and the Integral Program that’s spanned almost four decades. Through myriad changes, one constant has been his respect for the Christian Brothers.

“The Brothers immerse themselves in a culture, and they focus on the needs of the people. For education, they do the best job in the world,” he said.

Lester lived and taught with the Brothers on four continents in eight institutions—from an orphanage in southern India to a postulate house in southern Thailand to universities in Bethlehem, Kenya, and Manila. A number of Brothers have served as his mentors over the years, particularly Brother John O’Neill, who recommended Lester for many of the assignments at Christian Brothers schools.

The next chapter should be equally fulfilling. Lester and his wife are moving to Colorado Springs to be near their daughter, Angela, and her three boys. Lester sees it as the perfect excuse to retire—with gratitude for all Saint Mary’s has done for him.

“I’ve been so blessed to have lived with the Brothers in Asia, Africa, and throughout Europe,” said Lester. “It’s been such an enriching experience.” —Ginny Prior
Book Building

Margaret Brown-Salazar, a Saint Mary’s education librarian for 12 years, arrived at the San Francisco airport with more than just her ticket and luggage for her Jan Term trip to the Philippines. She and four student volunteers lugged 100 books, and had arranged to ship 800 more.

The books were for Bahay Pag-Asa (“House of Hope”), a youth detention center in Bacolod for about 24 children convicted of crimes ranging from stealing food to murder. Lasallian brothers built the center 10 years ago to move children out of the adult prison system.

When Bahay Pag-Asa’s Brother Dan Fenton learned a librarian would be visiting as part of the Jan Term Lasallian Service Internship, he jumped at the chance to redo the library.

“So before we left, I started collecting books,” said Brown-Salazar, one of three SMC staff members participating in the first Jan Term internships open to employees. She sought books from her church, her husband’s work, her neighbors, even the De La Salle High School basketball team.

Brown-Salazar, Brother Dan, SMC students, and the children on-site spent Jan Term shelving and organizing, using the color-coded online cataloging system Brown-Salazar made for Brother Dan. Since her return to the United States, the catalog has grown by more than 600 books.

“The boys said as we left, ‘You made us feel important,’” said Brown-Salazar, who is still collecting books. “This experience tied into what I believe: that literacy is the basis for democracy and human empowerment.” —Brian Foley

DANCE M.F.A. TAKES OFF

Last year, Saint Mary’s launched the M.F.A. in Dance, which offers programs in two areas: Creative Practice, and Design and Production—the only such degree in the country. The new two-year program has 15 students, 11 in Creative Practice and four in Design and Production. The second cohort of students begins this summer.

“We have a breadth of focus,” said Jennifer Smith, program coordinator. “We also have a liberal arts lens. Most M.F.A. programs tend to be conservatory-style, whereas we teach pedagogy, dance, and social theory classes, lighting, production, and stage management.”

The students, in their early 20s to late 50s, include midcareer dancers teaching dance, dancers still performing, and others interested in choreography and writing.

While there are many design and production programs that focus on theater, the SMC concentration is the only one that focuses solely on dance.

“Students learn all aspects of managing a dance production—sound, lighting, costume design, stage management, production management, and producing,” said Linda Baumgardner, director of the Design and Production program. “We thought that was important because in the world of dance, people are wearing multiple hats.”

Baumgardner hopes that graduates can do anything, like stage managing, designing, or touring.

“The skills are very adaptable,” Baumgardner said. “If you study production management, those skills translate into any project management anywhere.” —Sarah Weld

LUCKY NUMBER 13 At halftime during a Feb. 21 game against archival Gonzaga, Saint Mary’s fans gave a roaring ovation when President James Donahue and Athletic Director Mark Orr announced that former guard Patty Mills’ familiar number 13 would hang in the rafters and never be worn by another Gael. Mills joins Tom Meschery, number 31, and Matthew Dellavedova, number 4, in an elite trio whose numbers have been retired by the basketball program.
Champions Again!

Even as the defending USA Rugby D1A College 15s national champions, the Saint Mary's rugby team was the underdog going into the national championship game against Life University May 9. Life held the number one ranking going into the game, which was played on the campus of Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga., just a few miles from the Life campus. Adding to the home-field advantage were very un-Moraga-like weather conditions, a muggy day with the temperature topping 90 degrees.

But in a thrilling game that wasn’t decided until the final whistle, the underdog Gaels prevailed, 30-24, with junior Dylan Audsley earning most valuable player honors. A strong defensive stand in the final minutes prevented Life from pulling out the victory. It was the third year in a row the two schools met in the championship game and the second consecutive year the Gaels emerged with the title.

Nine starters had graduated from SMC’s 2014 championship team, and as a result head coach Tim O’Brien said this year’s team had to struggle to form its own identity. “The team had a tendency to become complacent at critical moments, which cost us in the win column during the season, but the team addressed this issue head-on and it paid off,” O’Brien said. “Their mental and emotional work in the classroom, combined with our endless defensive practices, kept the guys calm and deeply in the moment until the end.” — J.G. Preston

COMMENCEMENT 2015

This year’s commencement celebrated the achievements of 719 seniors and 599 graduate and professional students May 23 and 24. Political journalist Chris Matthews, host of MSNBC’s Hardball with Chris Matthews, addressed the undergraduates, encouraging them to speak up if they see an opening. “Never say no to yourself,” said Matthews, who attended a Christian Brothers high school in Philadelphia and attended College of the Holy Cross with President James Donahue. “Make them say no.” Information technology executive Monika Fahlbusch ’90, senior vice president and chief people and administration officer for the $2 billion firm BMC Software, offered the graduate and professional programs commencement address. “Surround yourself with young people,” she said. “They are unafraid. They are spontaneous. And they are interesting.” Brother Peter Korena Kombe, FSC, headmaster of St. Mary’s School for Boys in Nyeri, Africa, gave the graduate school invocation.

WOMEN RUGGERS

In 2001, 25 women filled Madigan Gym’s lobby, asking, “When are we going to get to tackle?” And so the Saint Mary’s women’s rugby team was born.

“They were very passionate and determined to compete,” said Associate Athletic Director Marty Storti, also the team’s first coach, who remembers them practicing in mud and rain.

The team has come a long way in 14 years and now has 25 players, practicing on turf and rugby fields instead of the Chapel Lawn. With the smallest, but toughest, pack of forwards in the league, this year’s team is a testament to determination.

Most of the current team members had never played rugby before coming to SMC. “I wanted to try something completely different,” said captain Chanel Farago ’16. “We know we can be as good as the boys.”

“The sport is fun, physically rough, and mentally challenging,” said coach Vicki Hudson M.F.A. ’08. “It creates a huge opportunity for young women to explore what they are capable of physically and mentally.” — Holland Enke ’15

CLASSIC DELLY

Former Gael guard Matthew Dellavedova ’13 may have surprised fans and followers of the NBA finals when he stepped up and played his heart out for the Cleveland Cavaliers, but Gaels are quick to agree that his all-in performance was classic Delly.

Read news stories, social media and comments from Gaels about Delly: smarys-ca.edu/Delly
From Classroom to Career

Students often leave college with some great book-learning, but little idea how to put it to practical use. Two Saint Mary’s professors plan to change that with a field study course that gets students out into their community—before graduation.

“We’re trying to provide students with high-quality, preprofessional experience that links their academic background in psychology with concrete career goals,” said Associate Professor Emily Hause.

Hause developed the curriculum for what is now Psychology 195 while teaching at Augsburg College in Minneapolis, then launched the course with Professor Mary True in spring 2014.

Twelve seniors attend weekly class sessions and work 80 hours during the semester at sites such as the Monument Crisis Center in Concord and the East Oakland Boxing Association, where Michael Jones ’15 (pictured) worked.

“Fieldwork gives students a deeper understanding of what they’ve learned in class and an opportunity to test their career aspirations against reality,” said True. “A recommendation letter from a fieldwork supervisor can be even more persuasive for a potential employer than a student’s grade point average.”

“This placement is helping me figure out whether I want to be hands-on or in a more administrative role,” said Madelyn Hutson ’15, who worked at We Care Services for Children in Concord.

Alumna Kalina Bryant served at Berkeley Youth Alternatives in 2014, and found work right after graduation.

“At Berkeley Youth, I met a lot of different nonprofit executives, and from them got some perspective on what I could do after college,” Bryant said. “And the kids were wonderful—I still mentor there.”

—By Kate Madden Yee

ON DEATH AND DYING

While some of their classmates traveled to Rome, Utah, and Brazil for Jan Term, one group of students stayed on campus to confront what so many Americans are afraid to speak of—death. Taught by Professors Emily Hause and Grete Stenersen for the sixth year, the Death and Dying class asks students to explore the physical aspects of death, the stages of grief and loss, and religious and cultural perspectives on dying. (A Jan Term class on death is not new to SMC—the late John Dennis taught one for many years.)

“Every year, some student will spontaneously say, ‘It’s called Death and Dying, but it’s actually a course about life,’” Stenersen said. “For me, it’s very life-affirming to teach this class every year.”

Students visit a mortuary, a crematorium, an embalming center, write their own eulogies, and hear guest speakers on hospice and grief counseling.

Designed to combat what Hause called “the silence our society maintains around death,” the class helps students talk about this universal and inevitable event.

“The class is not what I expected,” said Kate Wilmarth ’16. “In society we tend to avoid it. Everyone grieves and goes through the same process, but no one talks about it.”

“It’s so taboo. If you’re interested in it, people think it’s weird,” said Giselle Avina ’16, who is now interested in working in the death industry after visiting the mortuary. “It’s kind of a comfort that everyone has to go through it. I now have a broader and deeper understanding.” —Sarah Weld
The Rome Prize

The American Academy of Arts and Letters has awarded English Professor Lysley Tenorio its Rome Fellowship in Literature Prize. The award recognizes emerging artists and scholars who represent the highest standard of excellence in the early or middle stages of their working lives. It provides for a one-year residency at the American Academy in Rome. Tenorio teaches in Saint Mary’s School of Liberal Arts and M.F.A. in Creative Writing program.

How does the Rome Prize compare to your many other awards and achievements?
The Rome Prize is a year at the American Academy in Rome, where I’ll live and write. I’ve been at artists’ residencies before, but never with scholars as well, so I’m curious to see how they work and collaborate. To think I’ll be having daily meals with scholars in disciplines such as ancient studies, design, and historic preservation is both exciting and a bit intimidating. Hopefully, there’ll be wine.

Another difference—it’s in Rome! I’m excited to see how writing in a place where I don’t know the language, culture, or landscape will impact my own relationship to my work, to the process of writing, to language itself.

What does a day of writing look like for you? How might that change while in Rome?
The ideal writing day happens like this: I’m at the desk before sunrise, a pot of coffee is within arm’s reach, it’s snowing outside, and not a creature is stirring, not even a Bruce (Tenorio’s partner). I’m not betting on much snow while I’m in Rome, but good coffee should be easy to come by, and I have to accept that the city itself will be both inspiration and occasional distraction—I will be grateful for both.

Do you know what project(s) you’re going to work on?
I’ll be working on a novel and some short stories. I also want to get back into the habit of writing letters, hoping those I write will respond in kind.

How do you pack for a yearlong journey? What writing tools or favorite books will you bring?
Can’t leave home without pictures of my mom and dad. Those are the first things I’ll pack. And unpack. Otherwise, I have absolutely no idea how to pack for a year, so I welcome everyone’s advice. I understand that Italians are sleek and stylish, so I’ll be sure to pack my most slimming clothes—skinny jeans, black T-shirts—and to avoid horizontal stripes at all costs.

For writing, I’ll stock up on G-2 Pilot pens (black ink, fine point) and these terrific $1.50 notebooks from Japantown, which have brilliantly nonsensical covers. The one I’m using now says, “To make your own story. Great works around you must bring out richer potentiality within you.” Another has a kitten wearing a catcher’s mitt and reads, “Error?” Genius.

Some books I’ll pack are Mourning Diary by Roland Barthes, Filipino Martial Culture (a book about Filipino fighting techniques), and Amazons of the Huk Rebellion (about Filipina rebels during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines in WWII). I’ll also pack Paradise, Indiana—if my partner can’t be there with me, I’ll make sure his poems are.

The characters in your stories often find themselves in a place that is new to them. What inspires you about the relationship between place and language?
In my work, place is often at odds with a protagonist’s most heartfelt desires and most urgent plans; that tension needs to be reflected in the language. For example, a character might be standing in front of the Colosseum—ancient history incarnate—but she might process this experience with the flattest, most tonally oblivious language, as a means of reflecting dislocation, isolation, or resistance, because she doesn’t want to be standing in this Wonder of the World—she just wants to go home.

Where in the world have you done your best writing?
Rome, hopefully.
I am fortunate in so many ways. Looking back to graduation, I remember thinking I would get a good job, and I did. But what I am not sure I understood at the time is how much the attitude with which I approached each job would matter. What I know now is that I control the attitude I bring to each role, and that is the biggest differentiator to whether I am happy or not. At this point in my life, I am surprised by how much fun I still have at work and the connection I have with my adult children (20 and 24). Social media and working in high tech have allowed me to share deeply with them and their community and—let’s face it—learn what’s cool and interesting. I feel I have the best of my adult world while being inspired by the young world they are a part of.

When I was in college, I was very ambitious. I believed that I could do anything and be anything and have it all—a great career, a family, a nice husband, travel to foreign lands, service to the community, and plenty of time for a personal life. What I hadn’t realized was that I may not get to have them all at once. I am now in my 50s and am loving all of life’s possibilities. Life is long, so think about what you want to do with your life over the long haul.

Life after Saint Mary’s was going exactly as planned: successful career, happily married, a healthy and thriving daughter with another one on the way. It’s what I believed I deserved for living a life rooted in my Lasallian education. While pregnant with my second daughter, I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. Every focus of life was redirected. I now know that hard work and years of building genuine relationships with God, friends, and family doesn’t shield us from game-changing life events. But, these values do create a place where my own faith and experience are met with healing and gratitude.

The real world hits and...boom! For nearly three years, I crushed sales for PepsiCo in Sacramento. Integrity, critical thinking, and a positive attitude earned me top sales rep. Student loans paid off; yet, I wasn’t happy and didn’t feel fulfilled. A defining moment happened on a breezy Sunday afternoon. For the past year, I’ve become an internationally demanded youth motivational speaker at freddiesilveria.com. Since graduation, I’ve learned growth comes from being uncomfortable, the importance of having mentors, and daily discipline (journal, read, exercise, listen, pray). Rolling with the punches, I’ve remembered God first, family second, and Gaels for life!
KAREN CLYNE ’98
Senior vice president of client services at Eastwick, member of SMC’s Women’s Leadership Council

Learn to embrace and adapt to change—it’s the constant that will move you forward and prepare you best for the unexpected. This lesson has also taught me the power of resiliency. Losing my mom to cancer at 29 changed my perspective. Managing career transition and seeking balance in work and life—an ongoing energy. You power through; others depend on you. I’m grateful for every opportunity to cross my path, for my children and family who are my core, for faith that inspires me to do better, and for my journey. Because it’s mine.

BROTHER DOMINIC BERARDELLI
Special assistant to the president

My life took a big turn when I entered the Brothers’ high school in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A Brother walked into the classroom, knelt down, and bowed his head to pray. I knew I wanted to be one of these men. Yes, there are times when I’ve been challenged. Four years ago, I went in for a biopsy and fell into a coma. My niece, a nurse, sat by my side for five weeks until I opened my eyes. That’s God saying “he has more work to do.” He grabs me by the scruff of my neck and throws me back in the fishpond.

DUKE POWERS ’82
President, Paragon Technical Inc.

My father told me several times before he passed that life gets harder as we grow older. His insight seemed a bit harsh, but my father’s warning has played out in my life and in the life of so many I have known. In 2002 we lost my brother, sister, and mother to cancer all within 45 days. In 2013 we lost our beloved 20-year-old son, Luke. In our despair, we put our grief in God’s hands, and we are recovering thanks to his unfathomable love for us all and through the kindness of so many souls.

LYONE CONNER ’04, ’11 M.A.
Assistant registrar, Saint Mary’s College

Had I not applied to attend Saint Mary’s, I would not have met my husband, a transfer from Louisiana. Our desire to start a second degree in the M.A. in Leadership program surprised us both, but we did it together and were most astounded to know a daughter would arrive after the first trimester of classes. Our son came three years later, but it wasn’t his arrival, rather news of my mom’s cancer, that was unexpected. Saint Mary’s laid our path, and God held us on our journey. More unknown awaits, but we have the greatest Gael on our side.

MAHERSHALA ALI ’96
Actor

As a kid, I’d fall asleep thinking about my life as an adult, and imagine being great at something. I grew up seeing a lot of folks settling, stopping short of their unique potential. The act of settling and mediocrity became the snakes and rats of my imagination. They always terrified me. I’m working at creating the life I’m imagining, because that’s alive and fluid. With experience and age, it evolves, deepens. I need to be my best self. I need to know and feel my own unique potential in every aspect of my life. Spirituality, mind, body, marriage, friendship, work, etc. I don’t know if I’ll get there, but God forbid I ever settle.

Scots poet Robert Burns said it, “The best laid schemes o’ mice an’ men / Gang aft agley.” In his “To a Mouse, On Turning Her up in Her Nest With the Plough,” Burns composed a poem while standing above the creature’s destroyed home and gave us an enduring way to talk about the tendency of all our careful plans to go frequently astray. Any sensible person knows it’s wise to at least try to plan your life in order to reach your goals. But sometimes the universe has other ideas. So we asked the question: How has your life turned out differently than you planned?
Saint Mary’s undergraduates chat with presenters like Elizabeth Schreder ’12, marketing specialist at RIX INDUSTRIES (left in glasses), and Erin Kinda ’14, production assistant at PIXAR, about how their college studies have helped them beyond the classroom at a Career Night for English majors in April.
ENGLISH MAJORS WRITE THEIR FUTURES IN TECH.

Sunitha Girish ’00 wasn’t supposed to major in English. “My parents had intended me to be a doctor,” said Girish, 39, who concentrated on the sciences in high school in her native Dubai but wanted to try “something more creative” in college. And although her parents ultimately supported her decision, “they thought it was odd when I chose English,” said Girish, today CEO and founder of Laughing Buddha Games, a “transformational gaming” start-up that partners with nonprofits to showcase global issues and promote empathy.
Girish’s parents were scarcely alone in questioning their daughter’s desire to pursue an English degree. Rosemary Graham, one of Girish’s favorite professors, was herself warned away from the English department in high school. “My father’s own college education was a night school accounting degree after the Army,” said Graham, today a professor of English and Creative Writing and the author of three novels. “He had a very successful business career, starting in the mail room, and when I told him I was going to study English, he didn’t encourage me.” As Graham’s father explained, the degree had no practical value, and after all, she “could always read” on her own.

Decades later, parents still often fear that their lit-smitten offspring will wind up waiting tables and cursing the day they ever heard of Emily Dickinson. With today’s soaring tuitions and uncertain economy, majors that segue into a clear vocational path, like technology, science, business, or engineering, may look like the best investment. But in fact, said Graham, who changed her college major three times before settling on the subject she loved, “prospective English majors should know that there are a lot of things you can do with the degree.” And as a number of SMC alums have found, an English B.A. can even pave the way to coveted, well-compensated jobs in the technology sector.

As an English major, Girish enjoyed courses like those taught by Graham “where I was able to completely be myself and express myself through my writing.”
But meanwhile, she was also sharpening her ability to synthesize information—a skill that would serve her well as she pursued an M.S. in software engineering at Golden Gate University in San Francisco and started her developer career at Microsoft. Today, at the five-year-old Laughing Buddha Games, she's relying once again on techniques she learned in English classes, as well as her Lasallian training, creating engaging game plot-lines and acting as a storyteller for social change.

“Don’t have any doubts,” said Girish. “Being an English major gives you skills that are relevant in today’s world.”

“There is room in this world and this job market for creative thinkers,” agreed Clare FitzPatrick ’11, M.F.A. ’13, a third-generation Gael who uses her English-major expertise at Cognizant Technologies at Google, helping diagnose and create solutions for Google Map problems. Analyzing literary texts, said FitzPatrick, a former Riverrun editor who has published a handful of her “minimalist” short stories, has a lot in common with analyzing reports of app malfunctions.

“I don’t think any English major in history has ever thought, ‘I’m going to graduate from school and go to work for Google,’” said FitzPatrick, 26, who, in a one-thing-led-to-another scenario, did just that. But with ever-more-advanced systems, gadgets, and apps being developed every day, some companies are looking to hire strong thinkers and communicators rather than grads with specific technical know-how. In a 2013 study by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, 93 percent of the executives surveyed said that in their evaluations of job candidates, “a demonstrated capacity to think critically, communicate clearly, and solve complex problems is more important than undergraduate major.”

English major Marshal Caro ’12, now a project manager for the global finance operations team at Oracle Corporation, based in Redwood City, said that “the analytical value of the English major is often overlooked when compared to more numerical and data-oriented majors.” However, said Caro, who believes that his extensive co-curricular leadership activities helped him land the Oracle job, the major “teaches students to view arguments and information critically, finding weak points and connections that are not explicitly stated.”

Some English majors who wind up in tech companies, like Amanda Talbott ’07, a programs manager who focuses on Facebook’s diversity recruiting efforts, need little in the way of tech prowess to get a foot in the door. Talbott, a transfer student from the University of Washington, served for a year in Iraq as a public affairs officer with the National Guard and developed a keen interest in veterans’ issues. At Facebook, where she started in 2011 as a university recruiter, she uses her SMC-honed communication skills—“the backbone of any job I’ve ever had”—to help hire people “who are underrepresented in the tech area, including women, veterans, minorities, and people with disabilities,” among others.

“I’m not in a tech role,” said Talbott, 32, who contemplates writing a memoir about her time in Iraq, “but my job is to think a lot about how we fill our tech roles.”

Increasingly, though, experts recommend that English and other liberal arts majors pick up some tech training before knocking on Silicon Valley doors. “Apple is not interested in hiring people because they love literature, but because they’ve developed certain skills that will help Apple in its business,” said Ed Biglin, professor of English and African literature, and SMC’s chief technology officer from 2003 to 2012. Tech companies may value the brainpower that English majors bring to the job, Biglin said, but still like candidates to have taken a tech course or
two, completed a project that showcases tech skills, or perhaps volunteered at the college IT center. Toward this end, SMC is currently developing a digital studies minor that will serve as a complement to liberal arts majors, with an anticipated debut in 2016.

“The more of a technology base you have, the better,” confirmed Amanda McPherson, a co-founder of the nonprofit Linux Foundation in San Francisco, and the open-source software company’s chief marketing officer. That said, McPherson still prefers to hire English or other liberal arts majors for her approximately 35-person staff. “What I like is someone who is really smart and curious and cares about the world,” said McPherson, a novelist who holds a B.A. in English from UC Berkeley and a creative writing M.F.A. from the University of Arizona. “I like to see someone who as an undergrad had an intellectual passion instead of someone with a business degree. All the business stuff you learn on the job anyway. What you may be studying in some marketing course as an undergrad, it will be so different by the time you’re working.”

Andy Kraus ’97, who serves as information technology director for Cal Performances at UC Berkeley, shares McPherson’s openness to hiring people with a liberal arts bent—especially, he says, those who are good communicators. “The stereotype of the rigid, nonsocial programmer who sits in a dark room is not sustainable anymore,” said Kraus, who abandoned a biology major when he “fell in love” with the humanities in Collegiate Seminar and pursued an English B.A. And, as the upshot of a 1995 January Term class on the then-emerging phenomenon of the Internet, he designed, with classmates, the first website about SMC. Kraus went on to obtain an M.S. in computer science at Syracuse University in New York, but “made a conscious choice informed by my liberal arts education at Saint Mary’s” to use his tech skills “in the nonprofit and educational culture of the arts.”

Despite such cross-over success stories, however, the popularity of liberal arts versus business and science has flip-flopped at SMC in the past 24 years, echoing national trends. According to the College’s Office of Institutional Research, School of Liberal Arts majors (a category that includes English majors) declined between 1990 and 2014 from 57.3 to 39.2 percent, while business and science majors increased from 42.7 to 60.8 percent.

Biglin, for one, urges would-be English majors to think carefully before opting for a seemingly more pragmatic degree. “In effect, people who choose a major because they think it leads to a particular job are making a bet that they understand the future,” he said. “And they don’t.” To illustrate this point, he used to hand out his business card identifying him as the college’s chief technology officer and ask students to guess his undergraduate major. Few of them figured the guy with the techie job—a job that didn’t even exist when Biglin attended college—for a classics major.

“What’s more important than making predictions about the future is understanding the value of the intellectual and practical skills you develop as a student because those skills are transferable,” said Biglin, who was awarded his Ph.D. in English from UC Berkeley in 1969, during a period when “the academic job market had dried up.” Forced to switch gears, Biglin found work in the burgeoning tech industry, where companies “were thrilled to pay me quite a bit more than I made in academics” to write business and publicity documents.

Yet conversely, he said, “I’ve lived through various recessions, a time when engineers couldn’t find work, when tens of..."
thousands of people were being laid off in the industry.” So, he tells students, “If you’re choosing a major simply to give you a guaranteed job, that’s something you ought to think about more fully.”

Adds FitzPatrick, who puts in full work-days at Google’s Mountain View campus but continues to write in her spare time: “It’s sad when people choose a degree and are miserable the whole time and get into the world and realize they’re doing something they absolutely hate. Forget what other people are telling you. If you want a liberal arts degree, then do it.”
Anchoring

Home Plate

How Saint Mary’s baseball catcher Ian McLoughlin fought back his demons to shine on the field.
Ian McLoughlin crouches, and the sound of cracking knees rings familiar for a man who spends most of his time in a crouch.

Yet, when McLoughlin assumes his usual position behind the plate, he knows he’ll eventually get up. He knows that, once the inning is over, he’ll get back to his feet, walk to the dugout, and get ready for an at-bat or give a bit of advice to his pitcher.

In that context, the cracking doesn’t bother him. Instead, it serves as a reminder. A reminder of what baseball means and where it might take him. He doesn’t take the feeling for granted. Because, for as young as McLoughlin is, there was a time when his favorite sport was the only refuge he had.

Now a 21-year-old junior at Saint Mary’s, McLoughlin sits comfortably in the visitor’s dugout of Louis Guisto Field during a recent midweek practice. He surveys the workouts going on between the lines, lowering his gaze briefly to crack a quick joke with a passing teammate.

He doesn’t waver when it comes to the question of a past that nearly cost him everything. He’s not shy about sharing the details. The tougher the query, the more he thinks. In truth, the answers say more about the journey that lies ahead than what remains in his rearview mirror.

“I’d put on the face like everything was fine, but I was disgusted with who I was,” McLoughlin said. “I took advantage of my family, people that cared about me. I really didn’t care what I did. It was horrible.”

McLoughlin grew up as an aspiring baseball player in Manhattan Beach, Calif., a coastal community in Los Angeles County where the median home price is just under $2 million. He attended Mira Costa High School, dreamed about a career in baseball, and worked toward the goal of playing catcher in college.

And, for a while, he seemed on track to realize that goal. He attended camps, got noticed by college coaches, and, eventually, received a scholarship offer from Gaels head coach Jedd Soto. His athletic frame, left-handed swing, and catching prowess made McLoughlin a prized commodity.

But, while his baseball future seemed promising enough, other aspects of high school were spiraling out of control. Drugs and alcohol began to infiltrate his life, and soon baseball took a backseat. McLoughlin lost his junior season, kicked off the Mira Costa team for his transgressions away from the diamond. His parents sent him to an outpatient program to help him clean up. From the outside the program seemed to have worked, but McLoughlin knew it hadn’t.

His drug-free facade played out in its most pronounced form back on the high school baseball field. McLoughlin signed a letter of intent to come to Saint Mary’s and prepared to return to the Mira Costa team as a senior. But life off the field hadn’t changed—it had only gotten worse. He rejoined the team and got kicked off again.

Left with few other options, McLoughlin made a choice. On Christmas Eve, 2011, halfway through his senior year, he told his parents he had decided to seek help. He checked himself into a program called Sober College in Woodland Hills, a 12-step program that ranges from Alcoholics Anonymous to Narcotics Anonymous and everything in between.

McLoughlin began to straighten out his life. He worked to finish his high school degree and also began to take some college classes to get ahead.

At the same time, the future wasn’t going to wait and a tough conversation still loomed. The Saint Mary’s scholarship offer was gone, but McLoughlin was determined to tell the Saint Mary’s coaches the truth. They listened, and told him that if he enrolled anyway and stayed out of trouble, they’d give him a chance to win a spot on the roster.

“I remember there was this guy at our treatment center who was like the head spokesperson,” McLoughlin said. “He got on the phone with me, gave the coaches a call, and we kind of planned out what to say. I wanted to be honest with them. I didn’t want to beat around the bush.”

So, he came north to Moraga. He arrived on campus as a
freshman with no friends and no one to turn to. He enrolled in summer school and eventually met his future teammate, Jake Valdez ’16. McLoughlin offered to throw with Valdez, who’d been recruited to pitch for the Gaels, and that turned into a friendship that still lasts today.

“He had an electronic cigarette, which I had never seen before. I was really curious about that,” Valdez said. “I asked him what the deal was with it and he said ‘I got it in rehab.’ I was like, ‘Did you hurt yourself?’ I had never known anyone that had been to rehab. It was completely new to me. He was an open book about it. I asked him, he told me some stories, and it went on from there.”

Social life as a freshman offered new challenges for McLoughlin. While classmates would go to parties, he struggled with the decision to put himself in a difficult situation. He wasn’t perfect, but as he learned to deal with those aspects of college life, the answer eventually appeared in an especially familiar place.

Enter Saint Mary’s baseball.

Already acquainted with Valdez, he grew close with teammates Connor Hornsby, Anthony Villa, and Casey Burns (all class of 2016, though Burns has since transferred out of SMC). McLoughlin wasn’t shy about sharing his story, especially with this close group he’d grown to trust. Eventually, news of his past filtered through the team, and that didn’t bother him either. Teammates embraced him, and suddenly a support system was born.

Having a new family in the locker room and on the field didn’t mean McLoughlin stopped turning to the systems he’d relied on to make it this far. He sought out support group meetings in the East Bay and eventually began to invite teammates to come with him.

“It was a little overwhelming at first, not just hearing his story but hearing everyone else who could relate to him. It made him feel comfortable being there,” Hornsby said. “I wasn’t uncomfortable, but it was something new. After that, it became a regular thing and I got used to it and it was awesome being there with him.”

On the field, McLoughlin was struggling to regain his form. He officially made the team by January of his freshman year, appeared in 14 games, and collected five hits in 25 at-bats. While in treatment, he had played in a recreational league with men twice his age, but the level of play hadn’t come close to what he saw in his first season as a Gael. He did, however, make it through a season of college baseball, and instead of worrying about making the team, his focus shifted to improvement during his sophomore year.

Then came a coaching change. Soto resigned, and Eric Valenzuela took over for the 2014 season. A native of Covina, Calif., who spent much of his youth in the boxing gym where his father was a trainer, Valenzuela had seen firsthand the story McLoughlin was about to bring to him.

“It’s familiar. It’s a familiar story from my background and where I’ve come from,” Valenzuela said. “I have a lot of respect for Ian. I think he felt comfortable because of my background and my dealings with those situations from the past, whether that was family members or friends. I think that’s what made him feel comfortable. I’ve got a coach that understands, is go-
ing to be willing to work with me, isn’t going to judge me, and is going to help me.”

Added McLoughlin: “He had me come in and basically lay it out on the table. He said, ‘All right, that’s in the past and it sounds like you’re an awesome kid.’ It’s really cool that with this coaching staff the door is always open to you. A lot of coaches say that, but I truly feel comfortable that I can come up and talk to him about anything. It’s nice to have even more people on your side and supporting you and not feeling like you have to hide anything from them.”

So, with his sophomore season looming and the program heading in a new direction, McLoughlin took a more assertive role. He’d already transformed from a quiet teammate to one of the squad’s resident funnymen (with Hornsby’s help), and he began to show the natural leadership characteristics that all good catchers have.

That confidence turned to results in a hurry. He played in 44 games as a sophomore, and by hitting .322 in West Coast Conference games earned All-WCC honorable mention. Opposing base runners stole at just a .556 clip, and just like that McLoughlin established himself as one of the conference’s top catchers.

Off the field, McLoughlin’s progress has been just as noticeable. He finished the fall semester with a 3.7 grade point average, and he returned for his junior season as one of the Gaels’ veteran leaders in the clubhouse.

That’s not to say the journey is finished. Far from it, in fact. With a renewed focus on the things that matter—baseball, school, friends, family—the future seems limitless.

“I’ve never been happier in my life. I’m in college and I’m not blind to the fact that people are drinking. I’m 21, but I still don’t feel like I need to be part of that. It’s a choice I make,” he said. “I don’t look down on people that do. It’s something I’ve chosen to do. The team has really embraced me and supported me, and they respect where I’ve been and where I am now.”

If he gets his way, McLoughlin will continue to spend his share of time in the dirt this season. But, no matter how loud the cracking, both he and his teammates know one thing is certain. He’ll always get up.

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Plane Crash on Campus

The pilot might have been showing off, tipping his wing to the campus. It was May 2, 1944. Saint Mary’s was one of the nation’s colleges where the U.S. Navy set up preflight training schools during World War II.

“Showing off in an airplane, flying extremely low and doing aerobatics—in the Navy that was strictly against regulations,” said Orinda resident Teeb Thomas, who witnessed the crash that killed a young pilot. Thomas, now 90, was on the rifle range that day, receiving instruction on the proper use and care of firearms, including the legendary tommy gun, when he heard the plane hit.

“I was thrilled to see two Navy Grumman F6F Hellcat fighters buzzing us at a very low altitude. Naturally, most of us wanted to be fighter pilots,” said Thomas, who was 19 at the time and, like the other young men, could visualize himself in the cockpit of one of those fighters.

“After they passed over our heads, one started a slow roll to the left. When he was inverted, he stalled, making an abrupt flip up and completely losing control of the airplane, which continued to roll over the hill next to the rifle range and dove into the ground out of our sight. The flip was so violent that it created a contrail off of the right wingtip,” Thomas said.

The record shows that the two pilots had taken off from Alameda Naval Air Station. And rumor had it, Thomas said, “that the two pilots had just returned to Alameda Naval Air Station from the Pacific with their aircraft carrier. They were probably graduates of Saint Mary’s Preflight and wanted to give us cadets encouragement and a thrill. They accomplished it in spades.”

The pilot’s name was not released to the media, and any evidence of the crash on a Saint Mary’s hillside has been swallowed up by dense trees and brush. But it left a lasting impression on Thomas, who sees the dramatic crash every time he steps onto the Saint Mary’s campus. —Caitlin McLain ’15

FEARLESS ADVOCATE

Maria Elena Durazo ’75, long a force for worker rights, left her post as head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor to become the general vice president for immigration, diversity and civil rights at UNITE HERE, a national labor union primarily for workers in hotels, food service, casinos, and gaming. Durazo was born to Mexican immigrant farmworkers who traveled the West Coast with their 10 children to work in the fields. She went on to build a career as a major political leader and fearless advocate for workers and immigrants.

EXEMPLARY SPORTSMANSHIP

NFL referee Pete Morelli ’73 was honored at January’s Pro Bowl with the League’s Art McNally Award for “exemplary professionalism, leadership and commitment to sportsmanship on and off the field.” Morelli—the president of St. Mary’s High School in Stockton, his alma mater—began his officiating career working high school games and went on to officiate in the Big West and Western Athletic Conferences until an NFL scout discovered him refereeing a game between Saint Mary’s and Santa Clara.

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Come Together

Two Gael classes will celebrate significant milestones at Reunion 2015, July 17–19 on the SMC campus. The class of 1965 marks 50 years since graduation, and the class of 1990 will celebrate its 25th anniversary. They are among the classes with grad years ending in zero or five that are particularly encouraged to attend this year. But all alumni are welcome. The weekend promises a range of activities, including a tour of the new Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center, a dance, golf, and a Golden Gaels luncheon for alumni who graduated in 1955 or before. Highlights of the weekend are the family BBQ and dinner on the Chapel Lawn.

D.C. COLLABORATION

Washington, D.C. Gaels joined forces with the San Miguel School and alumni from Lasallian colleges and universities throughout the country on a day of service for the Lasallian Spring Into Action initiative. San Miguel school students worked hand in hand with the alumni volunteers packing lunches for the homeless and doing maintenance and cleanup projects at the school.

“The best part of the service day was interacting with alumni committed to the Lasallian mission from a variety of Lasallian colleges and universities, and with the students of San Miguel to serve the most needy in D.C.,” said Alisa Macksey ’00.

SUCCESS BY THE BAY

The San Francisco Alumni Chapter launched this year under the leadership of Tom Piro ’98 and Napala Pratini ’12, hoping to gather and connect Gaels in the City by the Bay. In April they hosted a successful event attended by more than 100 young alumni and current seniors, who came out to hear distinguished alumni Jason Shellen ’96 (Pinterest), John Koller ’95 (PlayStation), and Shayna Olesiuk ’99 (FDIC) speak about their journeys after college. The evening included dinner and libations, courtesy of NerdWallet, Pratini’s employer, an online source for information, insight, and consumer-driven advice about personal finance.

EVENTS

JULY

Exhibits at Saint Mary’s Museum of Art
12–Sept. 13 Bright and Beautiful—Early California Watercolors
12–Sept. 6 William Keith Through Sept. 6 Danae Mattes
9 San Francisco Chapter Happy Hour 5:30 p.m. Hi Dive, San Francisco
12 Denver Alumni Chapter Summer BBQ 6 p.m. Panasci Home
15 Sacramento Alumni Chapter Reception at the Capitol 5:30–7:30 p.m., California State Capitol, Eureka Room
17–19 Reunion Weekend Saint Mary’s campus
25 5th Quarter Football Picnic Redwood Grove

AUGUST

16 Summer Wine Festival 2–5 p.m. Soda Center
17 SEBA Golf and Bocce Tournament All day, Diablo Country Club

SEPTEMBER

19–20 SMC at the Lafayette Art and Wine Festival

For more details: stmarys-ca.edu/reunion-weekend
Lasallian to the Core

Karin McClelland ’90, the director of Mission and Ministry since February, embodies the Lasallian tradition.

McClelland and her roommate, Brenna Fitzgerald, were the first Lasallian Volunteers from Saint Mary’s, developing a dropout prevention program in Bronx schools. McClelland eventually became director of the National Lasallian Volunteer Program, doubling the program’s size and helping establish the Lasallian Scholars Program. She found her way home to SMC three years ago when she joined the Mission and Ministry team.

“As people of faith, working for social justice is core to who we are and why we are placed on this earth together,” said McClelland, a member of the original advisory board for the Catholic Institute for Lasallian Social Action (CILSA). “I am even more proud to be an alum now—and I was really proud in the ’90s. The amount of opportunities now for students to participate in service learning is amazing. When engaging in another culture, one learns that we are all interconnected and a part of something bigger than ourselves.”

Last fall, McClelland co-created, along with four female faculty and staff, SMC’s first Women’s Retreat for undergraduate and graduate students. “This retreat came out of my own experience of growing up, working, and taking classes in environments heavily influenced by a very masculine spirituality,” she said. “At the blessed age of 40, I decided to learn about women’s spirituality and to gain a little more balance in my faith life. This retreat provided a space for women to explore what it means to ‘care for their souls’ physically, spiritually, mentally, and socially.”

McClelland plans to increase such campuswide partnerships for students of all faith traditions. —Holland Enke ’15

What is a life hack? The Urban Dictionary defines a hack as a clever solution to a tricky problem. To hack is to modify or change something in an extraordinary way. Thus, a life hack is an extraordinary solution to a difficult life problem.

LIFE HACKS

Two Gaels have written books to help others manage important life challenges.

Michelle Perry Higgins ’94 has made a great living managing other people’s money. Now, the Saint Mary’s business graduate aims to teach college-bound students how to manage theirs, too.

A successful financial planner who runs her own firm in San Ramon, Higgins has written her third book, College Poor No More! 100 Saving Tips for College Students, just released in May.

“I discovered from clients that parents were launching their kids off to college without good money-management tools,” she said. It was an aha moment. “Sex and money are the two reasons people get divorced. And those are the things we never teach our kids until it’s too late.”

Her book is small (4 inches by 6 inches), with cartoons and down-to-earth advice—date on a budget and be your own barista.

“I hope it’s on the back of the toilet of every college student,” said the mother of two, who will donate all profits to college scholarships.

Managing your money in college is a great start. How about the rest of your life? That’s the million-dollar question that drove Keith Washoe, a 2013 Executive MBA graduate, to write his first book, The Heart of Success: Growing Your Professional and Personal Life the Right Way! The wearable-technology executive and musician interviewed over a dozen high-profile Silicon Valley power players about success.

“While they all had their own colors of wisdom, one common theme was the Golden Rule,” said Washoe.

“Success in your professional life clings to your personal well-being,” he said. “They’re so intertwined, you have to take care of both.” —Lynn Armitage

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Maura Wolf: What Matters Most

Leadership teacher Maura Wolf, M.A. Leadership ’06, recently published What Matters Most: Everyday Leadership at Home, at Work and in the World, a collection of 42 vignettes designed to prompt readers—busy adults, students, parents, and managers—to reflect on daily life issues. Wolf was spotlighted this spring in Diablo Magazine’s annual “Women to Watch” feature.

What is the main theme of the book?
It began as a way for me to manage competing commitments, raising small children and having creative intellectual ideas to get out in the world. Hopefully, this is a helpful tool for people to use the reflective process to work through those competing commitments—things like having to be home for my kid’s soccer game and also working through that project. You have to figure out what matters most.

How did you begin writing?
It’s been a very incremental project, which began after graduating from the Saint Mary’s Leadership master’s program in 2006. I started it as a young parent trying to figure out how to channel my creative and intellectual energy into a project that was manageable. That’s where the vignettes emerged. I could jot things down into teeny spaces and do a two-hour block in a weekend. It took about eight years.

Why vignettes?
I fell into this vignette form. For many years, I would help my friend, who is a minister, with her sermon. I loved having three or four ideas and a segment of scripture, and figuring out how do you weave these things together. I am a collager visually as well.

How do you suggest people use the book?
It is best used with a good friend or a management team or a small group of people. Read the vignettes slowly and talk about what resonates with you, what is relevant to your life, and share with other people what’s true for them around this topic. This is a curriculum for life, especially for busy, working, parenting people who have little time to go deeper and reflect on issues of meaning.

Any favorite reflections?
I really like the one about making chocolate sauce for my husband. Sometimes the little things are the things that matter the most.

What are you proudest of in the book?
That I did it. While raising small children, I completed a book.

Does this book merge your roles as mother, leadership teacher, and professional consultant and coach?
Yes! What fun to be able to work on a project that brings together all those parts of you. This book was an attempt to say that compartmentalization does not really exist. When we have a bad morning at home, we bring that to the office. When we’re freaked out about a deadline, we bring that home. This is relevant for parents, work-places, and managers.

How has your experience at Saint Mary’s influenced your book?
Fifty percent of the books quoted in here are books I read and used teaching at Saint Mary’s. They are books that resonated deeply with me. I was raised Catholic, and I have a deep faith. Saint Mary’s is a place that always reminds me of the presence of God. The book is an extension of that Lasallian call to extend education into places where it’s not and where it’s needed.

How do you relax?
In a million different ways, whatever I can think of in that moment. It ranges from taking a deep breath to going outside and looking at the sky to opening a book.
Playing Pro

DonAndre Clark ‘14 is one of the lucky ones. As one of 10 Saint Mary’s alumni playing professional baseball, Clark signed with the Kansas City Royals and played last year for a farm team—the Idaho Falls Chukars. “Baseball is something I’ve been thinking about since I was 3,” said Clark, “but I never really pictured how I would get there. When you get older, you realize all the things that go along with becoming a professional ballplayer.”

For starters, a player almost never goes directly to the major leagues. In fact, the odds of even playing professionally are slim. Only 8.6 percent of 33,431 NCAA players were drafted in 2013–14, according to an NCAA report.

But playing professionally isn’t all peanuts and Cracker Jack. The first contract season in the minor league pays a maximum of $1,100 a month, according to Major League Baseball. And players often have to stay with host families and ride buses on road trips.

A typical day for Clark includes lifting for an hour in the morning, taking a van to the ballpark, stretching, reviewing team philosophy, and baserunning. The team takes a 30-minute break and then suits up. “Then we listen to the national anthem and we start,” he said.

Some young players, like Ryan Brockett ’14, play for other independent baseball organizations that operate in cities not served by major or minor league teams. He pitches for the River City Rascals, based in O’Fallon, Mo., one of the 14 teams in the Frontier League, which are not affiliated with major league organizations.

Brockett and his teammates hope to sign with a major league farm team. Brockett, a left-hander remembered for his outstanding pitching performance as a Gael, started playing ball at age 4 as an outfielder because he loved diving for the ball.

The Frontier League lifestyle has 10-hour bus rides and very different weather from California’s, he said. “Lots of thunderstorms.”

But Brockett is fully committed to improving himself as a pitcher and is passionate about his career. “Coach [Eric] Valenzuela [Saint Mary’s head baseball coach] taught me to be so prepared that I deserve success,” he said, “which is a philosophy I live by every day.” —Caitlin McLain
A Gentle,
Talented Soul

Joseph F. Lanigan—a professor in the Department of Philosophy and a tutor in the Integral Program for 46 years—was known as a curious, gentle, talented soul. He was a scholar of Plato, with a particular focus on the Parmenides, the subject of his noteworthy metaphysics course that made particular demands of his students. In the Integral Program, his subjects ranged from Euclidean geometry to ancient Greek.

Lanigan was born in New York City on July 5, 1923, and spent his childhood there and in Rhode Island and New Hampshire. He earned his bachelor’s degree in English in 1944 at the University of Notre Dame, where he also received his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1956. But before completing graduate school, he spent a memorable time in Nevada City, Calif., working with a friend at a printing press, then called Berliner & Lanigan. His experiences in Gold Country yielded many wry stories as years went by.

After finishing his doctorate, Lanigan taught briefly at Saint Mary’s University of Minnesota in Winona, Minn., and then came to Saint Mary’s in California in 1959, where he spent the rest of his long, exemplary career until retiring in 2005. He had never imagined retiring from a teaching career he loved, but it afforded him time to continue his active scholarship.

A devoted educator, Lanigan was named Saint Mary’s Professor of the Year in 1998. He and his wife, Mary-Delia, were married for 51 years, and together they raised four children and sometimes took in students at their Berkeley home.

Lanigan was a devout Catholic and during his long career at Saint Mary’s attended daily Mass in the Chapel. He died peacefully in his sleep on the morning of Wednesday, Jan. 21, at the age of 92. Generations of students received the blessings of his many gifts.
1961
1 Armando Rendon, a member of the College of Arts and Sciences, since 1989, retired from his day job with the state in 2004 and began devoting his spare time to writing. He published a book of poetry (Up to Earth, Palibrio Press 2013) and two young adult novels, in both Spanish and English: Noldo and His Magical Scooter at the Battle of the Alamo and Noldo and His Magical Scooter on the March With the St. Patrick’s Battalion. Two sequels are due in 2015.

1993
Amy Blaisdell, immediate past president of Women Leaders Forum of the Coachella Valley, was named to the Riverside County Board of Education for her work as district representative to the Riverside County Board of Education. She is pictured at the Women Leaders Forum’s successful Women Who Rule! Awards Luncheon and Scholarship Fundraiser, in June 6, 2014. Amy has helped WLF raise more than $350,000 in college scholarship funds for students in its Young Women Leaders Mentoring Program.

2000
2 Carolyn Hunter can be described as an alumna that likes to talk. She credits her alma mater for having become “a living, talking, and communicating person.” Carolyn is a communications manager at a global engineering firm, specializing in high-profile or catastrophic projects that have a community outreach element. She develops public involvement plans, facilitates meetings, and works with clients to develop strategies to communicate to the public and press.

2004
3 On Jan. 31 Mary (Hudson) Luros was appointed to the Napa City Council.

2005
5 Ryan Lamberton’s (ME ’12) son, Micah, 18 months, joined his father Ryan and two sisters for the Dec. 13, 2014 #BlackLivesMatter #MillionsMarchOakland. He held this sign high throughout much of the march.

2006
6 Darius Moghadam and Katelyn Hegarty welcomed their first child, Layla Claire Moghadam, on Dec. 13, 2014. Layla weighed 8 lbs., 9 oz. and was 20.5 inches long. She can’t wait to join her parents in cheering on the Gaels.

2009
7 Michael Kirkendall proposed to Jen Hamarics in May 2014 at sunset on the Big Island of Hawaii. Their wedding is planned for August 2015.

2010
Ron Avenida EMBA has joined Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell LLP (JMBM) as its executive director. “Ron is a knowledgeable law firm executive who also brings us unique business experience,” said JMBM’s managing partner, Bruce Jeffer.

JMBM’s managing partner, Bruce Jeffer. Avenida’s career also includes working with a venture-backed technology start-up company as its chief operating officer, and managing a boutique consulting firm. Avenida earned a bachelor’s in business administration/management from California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, and an M.B.A. in international business from SMC.

2014
Since graduating with a B.A. magna cum laude, Daniel XuLi attends the University of California, Hastings College of the Law for his juris doctor degree. As a 1L (first-year law student), he made the school’s ADR (alternate dispute resolution) Negotiations & Mediation team, which will compete at the International Academy of Dispute Resolution Tournament in March. He also was elected as a 1L section representative to the law school’s student government.
Vanessa (Snyder) married Josh Bobbitt on July 5, 2014, at Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Church in San Jose. Saint Mary’s own Father Tom McEliligott performed the ceremony. The night was filled with lots of laughter, great food, delightful wine, and dancing the night away with incredible people. It was truly a beautiful way to start forever.
The Giving Garden

Seeds sewn at Saint Mary’s often yield fruit. Just ask Lafayette photographer and SMC alum Stu Selland, whose sensory gardens were inspired by a class he took here in 2003.

The nature course, taught by Brother John O’Neill and Professor Denis Kelly, helped Selland see his yard in a whole new light. Twelve years later, it’s a habitat for butterflies, birds, and the most curious creatures of all—humans.

It started with some simple terracing and a pond. “Brother John said ‘If you add a water feature, everything will come into your yard,’” Selland recalled.

It’s true. The cacophony of calls, songs, and tweets is like something from a nature CD. Finches and nut-hatches flit from feeder to fragrant bush to waterfall-fed pond. A riot of periwinkle blossoms draws birds, bees, and butterflies to its branches, and the air is perfumed with white hyacinths.

“The backyard is a real bird sanctuary,” said Brother John, an ornithology expert now living at Mont La Salle in Napa. “And the front yard has all these carefully chosen flowers specific to insects, with places to sit and watch what happens. He’s a real artist.”

Selland’s studio is ideally situated in a cottage in his backyard. A few steps from his door is a little bridge over the pond, where he shot his daughter’s wedding. A nearby rose garden is another favorite photography site.

Everywhere you look, there is symbolism. Four young redwoods, one for each of the Sellands’ four children, grow in a grove and join canopies. A statue of Saint Francis graces a garden nearby—a tribute to Saint Mary’s where his wife, Judy, works and where three of their children attended college.

“I would do anything for Saint Mary’s,” said Selland. He recently photographed the 40 members of the Chamber Singers and Glee Club before they performed at Carnegie Hall. Much like his gardens give back to the earth, Selland gives back to Saint Mary’s.

—Ginny Prior
Just Great

I meant to do something great. Really great. Everything pointed to that—the good high school transcript, the good college, the good kid. (Good x good x good = great.) But so far, greatness has eluded me. And I am running out of time.

When I was little, there was plenty of time. Time to win the mile at the Olympics, to dance with Twyla Tharp, to play the piano at Carnegie Hall, to win the Pulitzer Prize.

Back then, everything was possible. And then I arrived in a bigger pond, with larger, stronger, more ambitious fish. Perhaps I tried swimming faster but then slowed down my fin flap, and let the school rush past me. Or I realized there was no lighted path, no map. Which way do I go? And which way is up, anyway?

After college I had a grand plan of moving to a different big city every year—first San Francisco, then Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York. I wanted to sample each place and then, like someone trying on shoes, choose my favorite to call home. But almost 30 years later, I still live in the first place I landed.

I taught high school and hawked books before finding that I loved asking people questions and writing stories. But it was almost too late. My noisy biological clock nudged me out of the newsroom and home to have two children. I traded reporters' notebooks for board books. I drove to playgrounds, pushed swings, lifted small people up to monkey bars, doled out cheese and Cheerios, and scuffed all my shoes in the sandbox.

Perhaps there was some greatness in the ordinariness of a mother and her children, the small moments when I found them each sitting in a cardboard box in the den, reading, like roosting hens. Or my daughter's drawings of crooked tilting structures she called "tip-up houses." Or my son's elaborate Lego cityscapes. I have watched my teenagers bloom out of the babies they used to be, like chiseled sculptures emerging from pliant clay.

They are almost fully formed now—long lanky people, taller than me, finding their way through the sandbox of life without me and my scuffed shoes nearby. They teach me things and explain the new young world, the one I no longer inhabit as an ever-aging person.

And I am still married, to the guy I met when I was 19, the guitar-playing psych major with the dry wit who was my then-boyfriend's pal. He still plays the guitar, the sound of his key in the door still makes me glad, and I still laugh at his jokes. ("Kids, always marry someone who thinks you're funny," we say.) And there is greatness in this. In loving someone for 30 years, still chuckling over New Yorker cartoons in bed and trading daily musings ("Hey, did you see that story in the paper today?").

The basic stuff, the essentials—the kids, the husband, the house—all shine clear and healthy and I am oh-so-grateful for this happy routine. But I wonder what the young me would think. Did I follow the right path in the end? I have not invented anything lifesaving, made millions, or landed a high post in the federal government or some sexy start-up. I am not the head of or the co-founder of or the brains behind anything big (except for my to-do lists). My obituary will be short.

Or maybe writing this is how I uncover the greatness. Maybe it lies in the newspapers on the driveway, watching The Wire on Friday nights, the snarky jokes at weekday dinners, hiking in the redwoods, the lemongrass chicken at Le Cheval, the quiet sound of everyone asleep but me.

Sometimes, awake in bed, I picture them all sleeping, eyes closed, breath coming slowly in and out, in and out. The quiet settles on me like a blanket and then I can sleep. They are my greatness—and being able to put these words down here, to tell you this, to draw my own tip-up houses on the page.
10,000 of you will make this possible.

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A FUTURE GAEL
Dedicated Music

Brother Martin Yribarren composed a song for the March 12 dedication and blessing of the Joseph L. Alioto Recreation Center. He directed its performance by the Saint Mary’s College Sacred Music Choir.