

Katie Hammond Stack '99 Takes the Reins at the Diamond Grille

Congratulations to Katie Hammond Stack '99, who along with her husband John and an unnamed partner, bought Akron's iconic Diamond Grille restaurant in May of 2017. It is a homecoming of sort for Katie, who started out on a few other paths before fate drew her back to the Diamond Grille.

After Katie graduated from St. Vincent-St. Mary High School, she worked for several years as a dancer for cruise ship shows – a job she landed after developing her skills as a scholarship student at Martel School of Dance in West Akron. She then returned to Northeast Ohio to pursue a degree in nursing from Walsh University.

While she was a student, Katie worked as a server at the Diamond Grille to help pay for college. She remained a server after she graduated and took a job as an intensive care nurse at a local hospital, partly to help pay her student loans, and partly because she loved working at the Diamond Grille.

But after a few years, Katie realized her heart was not in nursing. Her heart was at the Diamond Grille. And after seven years of working at the Diamond Grille, fate offered her a chance to take it over from the Thomas family, who were ready to sell after having run the restaurant



Katie Hammond Stack '99 and her husband John are new co-owners of Akron's iconic Diamond Grille. Photo credit: Karen Schiely. Reprinted with permission of the Akron Beacon Journal and Ohio.com

for more than 75 years.

Katie's husband John Stack, who is an executive with the charter school operator Cambridge

continued on page five

Alumni Steer the St. Sebastian Soap Box Derby Team to Success



John Najeway '84 (top, right) celebrates with the Derby Dogs team that won second place out of 180 teams at the 2017 Gravity Racing Challenge. John is one of the parent leaders of St. Sebastian Parish School's soap box derby program.

On May 20, 2017, a team of sixth grade students from St. Sebastian Parish School claimed second place out of more than 180 teams at the 8th Annual Gravity Racing Challenge (GRC). This event, which is held at Akron's own Derby Downs, features school teams who race against each other after working together to build their own soap box derby cars.

St. Sebastian Parish School was one of the first schools in the area to participate in the GRC, which began in 2010 as an educational outreach program sponsored by

the International Soap Box Derby. And from the start, our alumni have been involved. St. Sebastian joined the GRC program in 2014, after Anne Morgan Dennée '85 approached the school about starting a team. She had heard about the GRC program when her son Matthew and some of his classmates from St. Sebastian attended a summer camp held at Derby Downs.

The first year, Anne teamed up with teacher Brett Beebe to lead a team of ten fifth-grade students,

continued on page two

We Will Remember

The Alumni Association extends our sincerest sympathy to the families and friends of our deceased alumni. If you learn of the passing of a St. Sebastian alumnus, please contact us by phone at 330.836.2233 x119 or by email at alumni@stsebastian.org.

(February 1, 2017 through June 30, 2017)

✠ Please keep these friends in your prayers ✠

George W. Bachmann, Jr. '39, May 15, 2017
Ellen Rohner Murphy '41, June 4, 2017
Charles E. Horning '45, May 23, 2017
Edwin P. Reymann '45, February 10, 2017
Rosemary Rauh Gorsuch '46, December 21, 2016
Julia "Judy" Roelle Baughman '49, May 28, 2017
Mary Kay Kehrle Castner '49, June 12, 2017

Samuel B. Comeriato '52, March 31, 2017
John "Bill" McCool '61, February 26, 2017
Kent Smith '61, June 4, 2017
Edward "Ned" Spalding '62, July 2, 2016
Charlie Baumgardner '71, June 4, 2017
Karen Buschko Powers '73, February 16, 2017

Soap Box Derby *continued from page 1*

who dubbed themselves the Derby Dogs. "We didn't win a lot of heats at the GRC," says Anne, "but the kids did learn how to build a derby car, and they all got to experience the 'thrill of the hill' during team week, when each of them got a chance to go down the hill."

Things really took off when **John Najeway '84** got involved the year his daughter, Madison, was in the fifth grade. Thanks to John's commitment and support, over the last few years, the Derby Dogs team has grown to include four cars and sixth-graders on the team. Next year, the team plans to expand to include seventh graders and possibly five cars.



Did You Know? St. Sebastian Parish School achieved STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) Designation from the Ohio Department of Education in March of 2017. This is quite an honor – out of 29 Ohio schools that applied, only nine were successful. The designation is a testament to our hard-working and forward-thinking teachers and administrators. While St. Sebastian is not becoming a "STEM School," the designation indicates that our curriculum incorporates a broad array of STEM-based learning, where the focus is on real-world problems, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, hands-on learning, and the use of technology and other materials to solve problems. This fall, St. Sebastian Parish School will open its Innovation Lab, a classroom with a large, flexible work area and centralized storage for STEM materials and tools.

Derby Cars aren't cheap, running in the range of \$700 for the car kit, wheels, weights and other requirements. Some of the money has come through funds raised by the school to support STEM initiatives. But John brought in additional funding and volunteers, and he even worked his connections to get really cool paint jobs for the Derby Dogs cars. And he did all of this while running his own successful business, Thirsty Dog Brewery.

John is not the only alumnus to have a child on the Derby Dogs team. Last year's team included the children of **Matthew Loyed '90** (daughter Arabelle), **Bill Monaghan '73** (daughter Abby), **Tricia Bedell Rothkopf '95** (daughter Clare), and **Joe Thomas '87** (daughter Ella).

John received major help from fellow parent **Clark Burns** and the school's STEM Coordinator, **Mrs. Kelly Gupta**. And thanks to Kelly's efforts, St. Sebastian Parish School has forged a strong partnership with the All-American Soap Box Derby. Next year, our school will help develop and then implement the pilot program for the derby's new STEM-based mini car curriculum. Thank you to all the alumni who helped establish this new Terrier tradition, and good luck to the 2018 Derby Dogs!

Alumni Updates

Class of 1948

In April, members of the Class of 1948 gathered together for one of their twice-a-year reunion lunches at Papa Joe's restaurant in the valley. According to Sally Longville, these mini-reunion lunches have been held since the Class of 1948 formed a reunion committee in 1998! This time, Kathy Holaday, Director of Development for the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, joined them and enjoyed a wonderful visit with this loyal group of friends. George Schumacher presented Kathy with St. Sebastian



School emblems (pictured here) that his sister, **Irene Schumacher Haus**

'45, used to wear on her uniform sweaters! Kathy was thrilled to accept these precious items on behalf of the Alumni Association. Pictured at

the luncheon are (left to right): **Sally Delagrange Longville, George Schumacher** and George's fiancé, Joan. Also in attendance were **Marjorie**

Mehigan Durbin, Charlie Kormanik and his wife Lorry, **Jimmy Meadows, Patricia Snyder Stiller,** and **Tony Zeller** and his wife Gladys.



Class of 1951

Marilyn Collins Stitz (pictured here) was honored by the Christ Child Society of Akron in June for her 50 years of chapter membership. She was presented with a rose, a certificate and a crystal plate personalized with her name, the Christ Child logo and her years of membership. Several other members of our alumni and parish community were also honored for more than 50 years of service, including parishioners **Mary Kay Luby** and **Ann Traverse** and alumna **Kathy McDonald Seikel '52** – and keeping track of all these milestones is **Micki McCool Trenta '56**, who serves as historian for Christ Child. Photo credit: The Village of St. Edward.



Class of 1952

Kathy McDonald Seikel announced the birth of her 34th grandchild, Amelia Grace, daughter of Kathryn Seikel Perry '89. Kathy and her husband **Lewis "Judge" Seikel** both graduated from St. Sebastian, Kathy in 1952 and Judge in 1949. All ten of their children also attended St. Sebastian: **Lewie '73, Susie Ahbe '74, Jimmy '75, Timmy '77, Tommy '78, Cindy Fisher '79, Tricia Okuley '81, Theresa Walter '84, Kathryn Perry '89** and **Jeffrey '99**. And the Terrier legacy has carried on to the next generation, with 11 grandchildren who are current students or alumni of St. Sebastian: Lewie's children **Matthew '05, Maddie Owen '16** and **Jonathan Owen '16**; Tom's kids **Shannon '14, Taylor '08** and **Thomas '11**; and Theresa's children **Patrick '12, Scott '14, Cecelia '15, Jason '19** and **Michael '20**. Kathy also received 50-year membership honors from the Christ Child Society of Akron this past May, as noted above.

Class of 1956

John McMuldren celebrated his 50th Anniversary of Religious Profession as a Brother of Holy Cross on January 25, 2015. John is a 1960 Hoban graduate who is now semi-retired and working in the Development Office for the Brothers of Holy Cross at Notre Dame, IN.

Class of 1964

Frank Margida (pictured here, center) enjoyed a visit with Fr. Valencheck and Lynn Frey-Steward, our parish music director, on June 29, when the NEO Jazz Orchestra played in Zwisler Hall as part of St. Sebastian Parish's Musical Art Series. Frank, who is the director/conductor of the 16-piece NEO Jazz Orchestra, told the crowd how happy he was to be performing back at his old school.



Alumni Updates (continued)

Class of 1973

The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, which is responsible for the Alumni Association, hosted an impromptu mini-reunion in April for the Class of 1973. Quite a few members of this class were in town for two consecutive concerts at the Akron Civic Theatre featuring 1973 alumni: **Marc Lee Shannon** (who played guitar in a sold out show with Michael Stanley and the Resonators) and **Mark Blinkhorn** (who brought his Decades Rewind show to his hometown). These two performers, members of their families and several of their classmates met up at St. Sebastian Parish School for a light lunch and a school tour led by our very own 8th grade student ambassadors. These old friends had a great time sharing memories (playing hide & seek in the bushes, drying mittens on the radiators, wearing beanies to Mass, receiving pen names from **Miss Rudolph**, and even an infamous cafeteria sandwich-throwing incident!) and visiting with each other. Father Valencheck made a surprise visit and showed the group the old principal's office, which used to have a sliding window so the principal could monitor the students in Zwisler Hall without leaving the office. For more details, visit the St. Sebastian Class of 1973 Facebook page or contact **Anne Giffels** (amgiff@hotmail.com).



Front: Kathy Coyne Bergh '73, Beth Stitz Tomoff '73, Annette Gagilardi Bader '73, Anne Giffels '73; back: Joe Blinkhorn '77 (Mark's brother), Lewie Seikel '73, Dan Cox '73, Greg Smith '73, Marc Lee Shannon '73, Mark Blinkhorn '73. Standing with Mark Blinkhorn is his wife Renee (in front of Mark), daughter Sarah and son Steve.

Class of 1985

Ryan Janovic emailed the Alumni Association to extend best wishes to his classmate, Anne Morgan Dennée, on her new job with the St. Sebastian Foundation. Ryan reports that he is still in the Army and now nearing 24 years in uniform. Currently, he is stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. with his wife Shannon and their son Ryan Jr. (age 9). They have been there for about a year and hope to be there for at least another year. Ryan says it's a very nice assignment for family, especially since his mom and stepfather live in North Carolina only about an hour away.

Class of 2013

Mitchell Adamczyk received the Knights of Columbus Manhood Award, one of the highest honors bestowed upon a graduating senior from St. Vincent-St. Mary High School. Mitchell plans to attend Case Western Reserve University majoring in computer engineering with a minor in alto saxophone.

Amy Gravenstein received the Elms Dominican Scholar Award, which goes to the student with the third highest GPA in the graduating class from Our Lady of the Elms. Next year, Amy will be majoring in chemical engineering at The University of Akron, where she will be joined by two of her Elms classmates who also happen to be St. Sebastian alumni: **Natasha Allen** and **Chase Bills**, both of whom intend to study psychology at UA.

Class of 1972 45th Reunion August 11-12

Friday: 5:30 p.m. Barley House Social (222 S. Main)

Saturday: 4:30 p.m. Mass followed by school tours,
6:00 p.m. dinner at Zwisler Hall

For more information contact Anne Najeway Vainer
at 330-687-1550 or email annevainer@att.net

Planning a Reunion?

The Alumni Association is happy to help promote your reunion! We can provide you with class lists for mailings and include notices in our newsletter. We are also always happy to give school tours to reunion groups or any alumni who wish to stop by and see their old stomping grounds. Please don't hesitate to contact the Alumni Association at alumni@stsebastian.org or 330-836-2233 ext. 119. We hope to see you soon!



St. Sebastian Parish launched a \$1 million capital campaign in May of 2017 for the restoration of the interior of our beloved church. The

Cornerstone of Our Faith

campaign was scheduled so that the work can be finished in time for the parish's 90th Anniversary Celebration on November 10, 2018.

The campaign is focused on the restoration of the original pews, terrazzo floors, glass doors, and the brass and woodwork. In addition, campaign funds will be used to upgrade the church's accessibility by improving the entrance ramps and automatic doors as well as installing sound loop technology.

The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, which is leading this fundraising effort, is pleased to announce that over \$400,000 in donations and

pledges have been received as of mid-June, 2017, and we are only in the first six months of a three-year campaign! We are truly thankful to everyone who has supported our church!

Our work is far from done, however, so it is not too late to lend your support! Checks can be made payable to The St. Sebastian Parish Foundation (476 Mull Avenue, Akron, OH 44320). To make an online donation and/or learn more about this exciting effort, including a more detailed list of projects, please visit: <http://www.stsebastian.org/restoration/index.html>. Questions? Please contact Kathy Holaday (Director of Development) at 330-836-2233 x113 or holadayk@stsebastian.org

Save the Date for these Cornerstone of Our Faith Campaign Events:

January 20, 2018 – Spaghetti Dinner

February 4, 2018 – Doughnut Sunday

November 10, 2018 – 90th Anniversary Celebration

Katie Hammond Stack '99 continued from page 1

Education Group, signed on to the idea, and before long, Katie's dream became a reality. Katie says they are not planning any major changes at the Diamond Grille, something the restaurant's loyal customers are surely glad to hear. Happy change is coming, though, for Katie and John, because they are expecting a baby in October. Their family also includes an eleven-year-old son named Will.

To learn more about Katie's amazing journey and plans for the restaurant, check out the June 15 feature in the Akron Beacon Journal: "Diamond Grille to Be Polished." Recently, Kathy Holaday, Director of Development for the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, had the pleasure to meet with Katie, who shared the following fond memories of St. Sebastian Parish School:

- **Teacher:** Her favorite was **Miss Crawford**, who is now **Mrs. Vernon** – who is about to begin her 30th year of teaching at St. Sebastian!
- **School Plays:** Katie was the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland* and the Wicked Witch in *The Wizard of Oz*.
- **International Festival:** "I was so surprised when I was older to realize that the festival was over at 8pm – it felt like we were up until midnight having so much fun!"
- **The Playground:** Especially 4-square and kickball but the most memorable are the "tire" and that "big old Y-shaped tree!"
- **Classmates:** Friendships that stood the test of time, like **R.B. Brownfield** (currently the principal of St. Vincent-St. Mary High School) and **Patrick Vassel** (currently associate and supervising director for the Broadway hit, "Hamilton").
- **Riding Bikes:** Katie grew up on Mineola and recalls riding bikes in the neighborhood from sun up to sun down – especially on the bike path at Schneider Park.
- **Walking To School:** Katie walked both ways every day, except on lucky mornings when neighbors Mrs. Betty Pavlin or Mr. Dave Redle gave her a ride!

Send Us Your Alumni Updates

The St. Sebastian Parish School Alumni Newsletter is published three times a year by the St. Sebastian Parish Foundation, where the alumni association offices are housed. We love to hear from our alumni! Please drop us a line and let us know what you are doing. Newly married? New baby? Get together with fellow alums? Email Anne Morgan Dennée '85 at alumni@stsebastian.org or fill out the **NEW** online form at <http://alumni.stsebastian.org/contact.html>.

Congratulations to Our 35 Newest Alumni



The St. Sebastian Alumni Association welcomed 35 new members at graduation on June 5, 2017. This class earned more than \$264,000 – over a quarter of a million dollars! – toward continuing their Catholic education over the next four years. Further, St. Sebastian students going to St. Vincent-St. Mary High School won more merit scholarships (based on high entrance exam scores) than any other school. At right is a list of the graduates and the schools they will be attending.

The Alumni Association would also like to congratulate the following five alumni whose children also graduated from St. Sebastian Parish School: **Carol Bertolini '72**, **Anne Morgan Dennée '85**, **Stacey Rosso Dobson '84**, **Tim Kastelic '80**, and **Tara McMasters Persinger '87**. Congratulations also to **Marjorie "Jimmie" Reiheld Leib '46**, whose grandchild Abby Minear graduated from St. Sebastian this year. Way to carry on the Terrier Tradition!

The Class of 2017

Akron Early College
Connor Hochstetler

Archbishop Hoban High School
A.J. Brown, Colin Jaroach, Michael Johnson, Brady Kastelic, Hayden Mickel, Garrett Persinger, Alex Raita, Maddie Sinley, Charlie Wilt

Firestone High School
Connor Beaven

Our Lady of the Elms High School
Grace Heinle

St. Vincent-St. Mary High School
Catiedia Bertolini-Rivas, Matthew Dennée, Luke Dobson, Jimmy Gupta, Theresa Hagey, Jeanie Hunt, Mary Jewell, Brian Kelley, Andrew McSteen, Abby Minear, A'Maya Scott, Emily Steel, Jack Thomas, Drew Vereecken, Jack Vought

Tallmadge High School
Nik Kil

Walsh Jesuit High School
Anthony Calleri, Sam Haslinger, Miles Newland, Aidan Schlueter, Noah Schlueter, Brody Toth, Nicholas Zografakis

Thank You and Best Wishes to Our Retiring Teachers!

This spring, three long-time teachers at St. Sebastian Parish School announced they were retiring at the end of the school year. Our heartfelt thanks and best wishes to these three amazing educators. May God bless you in your retirement!



Mrs. Betty Indriolo, junior high science teacher, taught at St. Sebastian for sixteen years. Education was a second career for

Mrs. Indriolo, who first worked for many years in the scientific field for private industry. When

asked to describe a favorite memory, Mrs. Indriolo said it was not just one thing, instead "it is the lessons that I developed that just worked so well with all my students. Everyone was interested, engaged, and learning; to me that is magical."



Mrs. Joan Langenbeck, physical education teacher, has been teaching 35 years, 28 of them at St. Sebastian Parish School. When

asked about her favorite memories, she listed the 8th-grade vs. teachers volleyball games, the haunted gym,

Olympic days, field days and the fitness competitions.



Ms. Melane Francis also officially retired this year. In 2014, the Alumni Newsletter reported that Ms. Frances was

leaving classroom teaching after more than 35 years at St. Sebastian. She remained at the school as a tutor and as principal of the Parish School of Religion for a few more years, but she has now retired from those positions as well, compiling an amazing 40 years of service to our community.