

THE blarney stone

A PUBLICATION FOR THE COMMUNITY OF NOTRE DAME PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND MARIST ACADEMY



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Creating a better tomorrow

ND environmentalists strive to create a sustainable tomorrow

Almost a year to the day after the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history, NDPMA students welcomed Earth Day once again with a vow to help make their world a better place for themselves and for generations to come.

It was on April 20, the day last year on which the world celebrated Earth Day, that a massive explosion on an offshore oil-drilling platform in the Gulf of Mexico killed 11 workers and sparked a huge fire that eventually sank the rig. More than 200 million gallons of crude oil leaked into the gulf over the next five months, killing thousands of marine animals and affecting thousands of people in the fishing and tourist industry—already struggling in the economic downturn.

This year, as Earth Day passes on April 22, the world is experiencing once again another catastrophic human and environmental tragedy. The people of Japan continue to struggle to recover from what for them has been their own worst environmental disaster—the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, and the subsequent release of radiation from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Environmental club encourages stewardship

Students at Notre Dame joined with other world citizens in expressing concern over

the Japanese crisis and the state of the environment in general. Around 30 freshman, sophomores, juniors and seniors, however, are more intimately involved in environmental stewardship by their membership in the school's Environmental Club. Formed



Environmental Club members are committed to leaving the world a better place. Recent club activities included roadside cleanup on Giddings.

in 2001, the Environmental Club at NDP was created to raise awareness among the student body of how the small differences they make in their everyday lives can make a big impact in conserving resources and protecting the environment.

NDP senior Marty Opthoff, who just completed his term as president of the club, says the best thing any student can do is to spread awareness of green practices. "Simple things add up and really make a difference," he said. "When we all work as a community, we see big results."

According to club moderator Michelle

Garcia, a math teacher in the upper division, e-club members try to accomplish environmental stewardship by recycling paper and plastic throughout the entire school and by sharing vital information with all students through announcements, regular meetings and newsletters.

"In addition to educating others about the environment, we try to show the members of our club and other students how they can do more," said Garcia, who has been on the faculty of Notre Dame for seven years. "We participate in Adopt-A-Highway to clean up Giddings Road, we visit organic farms to help plant trees, and we even visit a "green" convent to see how the nuns there practice environmental sustainability.

"Also, we've helped to pick vegetables and assisted in a year-end cleanup of a local organic farm that donates food to the needy. It was a good experience for the kids. I am also looking into doing an activity with the Clinton River Watershed, but don't have the details yet."

Sustainability

Sustainability also is a big part of what the club does. "We recycle every week," says Garcia. "Sustainability refers to lowering your carbon footprint, basically, by using less of the fossil fuels we have available. This is done in many ways, but I would say the NDP e-club focuses on sustainability

Please see Environment, page 3

Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy provides its diverse student body a Catholic and internationally recognized college-preparatory experience of lasting value.

WORLD HEALTH DAY IN MIDDLE DIVISION GETS STUDENTS TALKING ABOUT HUNGER AND WASTEFULNESS
 (See page 5)

Chemistry and music come together in South Bend

2007 NDP grad studies music and chemical engineering at the University of Notre Dame

University of Notre Dame student Liz Dallacqua will graduate from college this spring armed with a bachelor's degree after majoring in both chemical engineering and music. But she originally didn't think

her educational career would end in South Bend. In fact, Dallacqua's planned academic road map included both a master's of music and then a doctorate in piano performance from Purchase College in Purchase, New York.

However, Dallacqua ran into an unexpected fork in the road. She

just recently was offered and accepted a position with Chrysler LLC as a fuel-systems engineer starting in mid-June. So it looks like Purchase College will have to wait for this talented engineer-musician.

"My original goal was to be an artist in residence at a university, someplace like Purchase," she says. But those plans are on indefinite hold now as she begins an exciting new career in the automotive industry.

Getting her four-year degree from Notre Dame was not without its own excitement and challenges, according to Dallacqua. "Unless an undergrad does a five-year program, I would suggest avoiding double majoring at all costs if you plan on being an engineer," she says. "No matter which college you attend, engineering is an extremely rigorous program and requires a significant amount of your time and atten-

tion and puts a real crimp on a social life."

She says that college is supposed to be a time in your life for exploration and self-discovery. "Don't let your eyes get too big for your stomach; allow yourself some free time for more than just class work. And even though it's difficult in a large university setting, it's important to remember that you are unique."

On why she chose the University of Notre Dame, Dallacqua says that although her father is a UND alum, it is far from the main reason she went to college there. "Notre Dame's campus is absolutely beautiful and has always felt like home. It was also one of the few colleges that could accommodate both an engineering and a music major."

Even though she has been extremely busy in college and no doubt embodies the "academic scholar" part of ND Prep's mission, Dallacqua still managed to squeeze in what are equally important components of the Marist school's mission: "Christian person and upright citizen."

During her first year at UND, Dallacqua started volunteering at the local homeless center as part of a community-service requirement. South Bend's Center for the Homeless is a rehabilitation center that helps those who have struggled financially or have suffered from drugs or abuse find a way to get back on their feet.

"My job freshman year was to help with after-school tutoring for kids living at the center and I fell in love with what the organization was doing," she said. "For the past three years, I initiated and procured funding for the center, and organized a kids-against-violence program called 'Take Ten' for fami-


lies at the homeless facility. Although it was only once a week, Take Ten is something I looked forward to doing and has proved to be the most rewarding experience of my college career."

Despite all the hard work, Dallacqua also thinks her experience with seemingly unrelated majors was rewarding.

"Chemistry and math have always been my strong suits, but I just couldn't give up music when I graduated high school. Even after four years of balancing the two majors, it turns out that I still love tickling those ivories."

She says the four years she spent at Notre Dame Prep played a huge role in her post-secondary success at the University of Notre Dame. "There is always an adjustment period during the typically tough freshmen year of college," she said. "But, in terms of academics, I felt that NDP prepared me for just about anything."


Dallacqua says she was inspired by many teachers at NDP. She mentioned Mrs. Derico, Mrs. Bembas, Mr. Osiecki, Mr. McCaskey and Mr. Canon, among others. "The wonderful thing about NDP is that you are treated like a young adult at the same time you are given the tools to face the world lying ahead," she said.

"I thank Mrs. Derico and Mrs. Bembas for opening my eyes to a literary world beyond Harry Potter. Thanks also to Mr. McCaskey for teaching me calculus by throwing logs and singing songs that I still sing today, to Mr. Osiecki for getting me out of two social science requirements at the University of Notre Dame, and to Mr. Canon for introducing me to Mel Brooks and making European history so enjoyable." 



KILLER BEES WIN STATE ROBOTICS CHAMPIONSHIP

The Killer Bees, NDP's robotics team, which is moderated by upper-division science teacher Dr. Jim Doyle, put together a great weekend of robotics match play and on April 9 earned the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) state championship at Eastern Michigan University.


Besting more than 180 other teams, the state-champion alliance of students from ND Prep, Huron Valley Schools and Goodrich High School earned a trip to the world finals later this month in St. Louis, Missouri (April 27-30). 

Killer Bees captain and NDP senior Matt DePorre, right, holds up championship trophy after the team earned the state title. Photo by Dan Ernst.



NDPMA RECEIVES CONTINUING NCA CASI ACCREDITATION

Head of School Fr. Leon Olszawski, s.m., announced in March that Notre Dame Preparatory School and Marist Academy has earned continuing accreditation from the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (NCA CASI), an accreditation division of AdvancED. This action was taken at the AdvancED Accreditation Commission meeting held in Tempe, Ariz., on February 2, 2011. NDPMA has been accredited since 1998.

NCA CASI provides nationally-recognized accreditation, the purpose of which is continuous school improvement focused on increasing student performance. To earn accreditation, schools must meet NCA CASI's high standards, be evaluated by a team of professionals from outside the school, and implement a continuous process of school improvement. Accreditation is granted on a five-year term. 



Environment, from page 1

through our recycling and environmental cleanup efforts and by promoting general awareness among students.”

Garcia notes that each member of the group is very selfless in that cleaning up after other people is not always all that enjoyable. “These kids do it because they care and because they know how important it is to take responsibility for the beautiful earth God gave us.”

Opthoff, who will be attending Michigan State University in the fall, believes he and the other students in the Environmental Club really do make a difference in how the school as a whole feels about its environmental responsibility. “Just by encouraging my friends to change their habits, this school is a greener place.”

At a minimum, Environmental Club members are required to attend two meetings per month and to help with recycling duties at least six times per semester.

Garcia says that keeping young people today focused on the environment is as important as ever. And that fits perfectly with NDPMA’s mission of forming “upright citizens.”

“I’ve always seen the earth as a gift from God,” Garcia said. “If we don’t take care of



E-club moderator
Michelle Garcia

it, we are insulting Him.” She says that if we are teaching our students to be upright citizens, “we must also teach them to be responsible for caring for the planet’s water and air that is so precious to us.”

Pressing environmental issues

In a recent article on CNN.com, Michael Vandenberg, who is director of the Climate Change Research Network, says he hopes nuclear concerns recently raised as a result of the Japanese tragedy don’t overshadow other pressing environmental issues that Americans should remember as they recognize Earth Day 2011.

“We have to continue to discuss climate change, because if we get that problem wrong, many of the other things we talk about in the environmental area won’t matter,” said Vandenberg, who also teaches at Vanderbilt University Law School.

For Garcia, she sees the world’s dependency on oil as an urgent environmental issue today. “There seem to be so many other ways to create an energy source and so few of them are being utilized,” she said. “I don’t just mean for cars, but for heating buildings, for manufacturing process, etc.”

Vandenberg is encouraged to see that his students—“although probably not as politically outspoken as their counterparts

when Earth Day began in 1970”—are anxious to learn as much as they can about being environmentally friendly.

Everyone should realize the importance of doing his or her part to help improve the environment for future generations, Vandenberg said.

Garcia, Opthoff, and members of NDP’s Environmental Club would certainly concur. 🌱



NDP senior Marty Opthoff is finishing his term as president of the Environmental Club.

LOWER-DIVISION STUDENTS MEET WITH U.S. SENATOR TO DISCUSS INVASIVE SPECIES IN THE GREAT LAKES



Claire Seitzinger, left, presents her findings to U.S. Sen. Carl Levin as fellow fifth-graders Kyle Cragg and Thomas Ridge look on.

As part of the action plan of their International Baccalaureate exhibition, Notre Dame Marist Academy fifth graders Kyle Cragg, Thomas Ridge and Claire Seitzinger met with U.S. Senator Carl Levin in his Detroit office on March 22 to discuss the research they had done on invasive species in the Great Lakes.

The senator listened intently as the students presented their findings on the various exotic species currently living in the Great Lakes or threatening to invade the waterways.

Levin has been a key proponent of finding ways to rid the Great Lakes of invasive species. A bill coauthored by Levin and Sen. George Voinovich, R-Ohio, and signed into law in December will aid in the fight against the further spread of Asian carp in the United States. The Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act, S.1421, added the bighead carp species of Asian carp to a list of injurious species that are prohibited from being imported or shipped in the United States.

“These fish pose a real, clear and growing threat to the Great Lakes and I will continue working to ensure tools like the Asian Carp Prevention and Control Act and others will be available as we counter this threat,” Levin said in December after the bill was signed. “The devastating effects Asian carp could have on the Great Lakes are not fully known, and I want to make sure they are never realized.”

Sen. Levin thanked the lower-division students and told them they had done a great job with their research and presentation. He said he looks forward to finding an effective solution to this very important problem. 🌱



As part of the Environmental Club-sponsored “Adopt-a-Road” commitment, club members spent a recent afternoon removing debris from the side of a local street near the school. The club works on the initiative twice a year—in the fall and spring.

ND's Mandarin Chinese language teacher is a long way from home but living her dream

Joanne Liu, Notre Dame's Mandarin Chinese language instructor, grew up in Taiwan and has always wanted to teach. In 1990, after graduating from Soochow University in Taipei City, Taiwan, with a B.A. degree, Liu came to the States to further her college education. It was the first time she had been out of her home country.

She enrolled at Eastern Michigan University where she received a master's

degree in secondary education. that being a teacher again was also a great way to watch her son go through his own schooling. Which brings this story (and Liu) to Notre Dame.

Now finishing up her third year at Notre Dame's middle and upper division and with her son currently enrolled in the junior-kindergarten program at ND Marist Academy's lower division, Liu has finally fulfilled a dream.

Even though she was very busy prepar-

ing you as a teacher, but it's always respectful and cooperative. I think that is due more to general cultural differences than anything else.

Why do you teach?

For me it is very rewarding to see how students grow over the years. I love language and want to somehow give that back to the students. I realize that some kids are not necessarily wired for language, especially for a brand new language like Mandarin Chinese. But I love the challenge of helping those students learn as well.

Why did you want to teach in America?

English is a mandatory second language for schoolchildren through grade 12 in Taiwan. When I considered leaving Taiwan, teaching in the U.S. was my first choice because of the experience I had with the English language during my own schooling.

How does the atmosphere at NDPMA differ from your own schooling in Taiwan?

The whole atmosphere here is very active compared to my country. More participation! In my country, we had to be more conservative and reserved in the classroom. We just sat quietly waiting for the teacher to call on us. There were very few raising of hands to get attention. Even though we knew the answers, we preferred to wait to

Please see Dream, page 6



Joanne Liu, Mandarin Chinese language instructor, conducts a typically lively class with Notre Dame upper-division students. Liu, who was born in Taiwan, says she has always wanted to teach Chinese in the United States.

degree in secondary education.

However, as the early to mid 90s brought an explosion of technology and the Internet around the world, Liu put her plans to teach on hold as she quickly found work as a software programmer in Michigan. Shortly thereafter she met her husband, who is originally from Shanghai and now works as a mechanical engineer with a major U.S. manufacturer in the Detroit area.

After a number of years in the IT field, Liu felt that something was missing. Her lifelong desire to teach—she also taught English for three years in Taiwan—and the fact that she came from a family full of teachers kept the little voice in her head very busy telling her that she too must teach again.

She and her husband also became proud parents of a young son and Liu thought

ing her students for the Michigan China Quiz Bowl held April 16, she took a few minutes recently to discuss her take on teaching in the States and at NDPMA.

What were your first impressions of NDPMA and now after three years on campus, what is your take on the school and its students?

The administration and the other teachers were very supportive and welcoming when I first arrived on campus. Regarding students, I am very impressed with the efforts of students at ND. They try very hard to do the best they can. Compared to students in Taiwan, they are very aggressive about making their opinions and ideas known. In my country, students just wait and wait for the teachers to express ideas and opinions. We are taught at a very young age to comply with authority figures. But here it's okay to express yourself—positively or negatively. Students here at ND sometimes challenge



Taipei 101, formerly known as the Taipei World Financial Center, is behind Liu in a photo taken during a recent visit to her hometown of Taipei. Taipei 101 was the world's tallest building when it was completed in 2004.

World Health Day at middle division a lesson in hunger, food access, food waste and urban gardening

By Brenda Kambakhsh, IB MYP Coordinator,
Notre Dame Marist Academy

Students in Notre Dame's middle division celebrated World Health Day on April 7 with a day of activities and events related to the book *Seedfolks*, written by Paul Fleishman. The book—read during the school's March reading month—is a fictional account of how an empty lot became an urban garden and brought a community together.

World Health Day at NDMA focused on the topics of hunger and food access, food waste, urban gardening, and also on what people around the world eat as compared to food eaten by our students and their families. Students began the day by filling a Gleaners Food Bank truck with 2,375 pounds of food (enough for 1,827 meals, more than doubling our goal of 1000 pounds). One student wrote in his reflection on the day, "My favorite part of the day was packing the food van. I was proud to see how much food we packed and how many people we fed."

Speakers Joel Baetens and Stefanie Bair, co-founders of PHEED (People Helping Everybody Eat Daily) then talked to the kids about how they worked with the cafeteria at Oakland University, resulting in the cafeteria service now donating hundreds of pounds of leftover food to Forgotten Harvest. Joel's story of living in his car, homeless and hungry, while waiting for the university semester to begin, really had an impact on ND Marist students. A student later wrote, "Most of the time we are only told about the wrongs in society, but today we got a real, personal story of someone's struggles. It shocks me that someone can rise from being poor to helping those in the same situation."

Master gardener Bill Pioch, coordinator of youth gardens and farm stands with the Michigan State University Extension Program, taught students about urban gardening, creative ways to plant, and how to get involved in gardening.

NDPMA parent Denise LeDuc, development coordinator with Gleaners Food Bank,

spoke about the problem of hunger in our local communities and shared stories of food distribution and urban-gardening projects throughout metro Detroit. Students then did role-playing for a community food game from Gleaners, illustrating how some of us experience ease in obtaining food while others face serious difficulties in terms food access. "I most enjoyed the food game today," wrote one student. "It taught us clearly how poor people around the world suffer to get food and nutrition without enough money." In his reflection another student wrote, "I enjoyed being a poor person in the role-playing game because it showed me how fortunate I am."

Students also planted hundreds of seeds, now being grown into small plants in the ND Marist wing, which will be donated to urban gardens around the city of Pontiac. Students also folded 4,800 bags to help prepare for the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive on May 14. With the help of the U.S. Postal Service, this food drive brings in over three-quarters-of-a-million pounds of

food for those in need for five counties throughout southeastern Michigan.

The day ended on a high (and loud!) note with a performance by Royal Hoax, a local rock band that educates people about hunger in our area. The band donated a portion of their proceeds to Gleaners Food Bank. T-shirts and CDs also were raffled to those who brought \$1.00 to wear jeans for the day.

One sixth grader summed up his thoughts about the day by saying: "Today I learned that I waste so much more than I realized. People can scrounge in a dumpster and beg all day for one speck of food and I have all I need handed to me on a platter—literally! I learned that I need to either finish everything I have to eat, or donate the leftovers. So like Jesus said, "Gather the leftovers and let nothing be wasted!" 🍴🌱



Left, Notre Dame middle-division students planted hundreds of seeds on World Health Day. They are now being grown into small plants in the ND Marist wing and eventually will be donated to urban gardens around the city of Pontiac.

Dream, from page 4

be called. And we kept the answers very short. No long stories. I also observed this when I was a college student at EMU. Now it is my task to remember this difference now that I'm standing at the front of the class. Another important task for me is to bring the Chinese culture in to the classroom along with the language. You cannot separate the two. I try to teach the students both the characters of the language and why they were created in the first place.

Why do you think it's important to learn a second language and why Chinese in particular?

I think one of the important advantages of learning a second language—any language—is that you naturally examine your native language as well. I think learning Chinese is important today because of the rapid growth of China as an economic power in the world and with the world getting smaller everyday, students who learn Chinese will have a certain advantage over others who do not study this language.

How does teaching compare with other professions?

From a very young age I only wanted to be a teacher. As a young student I always

thought of teachers as very strong and powerful—kind of like kings or queens! Plus my aunts, their husbands, and many other family members were teachers, which also influenced my own decision to teach.

What would you choose for a job if you weren't a teacher?

Truthfully, [with a chuckle] I'd like to stay home and take care of my son and the house. But if teaching wasn't my job, I would still be in education in some other way, maybe in a supporting role, administration, etc. 🇺🇸

NDPMA INTERN LOOKING FOR HOST FAMILY

Joanne Liu will have an assistant for her Mandarin Chinese courses during the upcoming fall semester. Han Wang, currently a student at National Taiwan University in its theater and communications program, will be joining the staff as an intern teacher.

The school's Modern Language Department is now looking for a maximum of two families to host Wang during her one semester at the school.

Find out more about this opportunity by e-mailing Melissa Archer, NDP's coordinator of Amity Institute intern teachers, at: marcher@ndpma.org, or by calling 248-373-5300, ext. 8134.

NOTE: It is not necessary to have a student in a Mandarin Chinese course in order to be a host family.

BR. LOUIS TO BE INDUCTED INTO CHSL HALL OF FAME, NDP IS 'SCHOOL OF THE YEAR'

The Catholic High School League has announced that NDPMA's Bro. Louis Plourde, s.m., will be inducted into its Hall of Fame.

Bro. Louis, who has been serving at NDPMA since it was founded in 1994, will receive the hall's "Distinguished Service" award at the league's annual dinner to be held June 13 at Fern Hill Country Club in Clinton Township.

Dubbed "super-fan" by students and colleagues alike, Bro. Louis has been a regular fixture at school athletic events. His enthusiasm for the school and especially for its student-athletes has contributed greatly to NDP successes on the field and court over the past 16-plus years.

Before his tenure at NDPMA in Pontiac, Bro. Louis served 12 years at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods.

The CHSL also announced that Notre Dame Preparatory School will receive the 2011 James Leary "School of the Year" award at the June 13th event. The Leary award was created in 1980 to honor the late coach and athletic director from University of Detroit High School. It is presented annually to the school that best exemplifies spirit, sportsmanship and cooperation. 🇺🇸



A world of education

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School web site: ndpma.org

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