

# Steeple Talk

Volume 3, No. 2

March 22, 2009

## News from the STA Mass communities:

**7:15 Daily Mass:** Fr. Gene Konkell from St. Patrick's Seminary and Msgr. Gene Boyle share presider duties on alternate weekdays.

**7:30:** The youngest EMs-in-training, Clarissa Daniel and Gianpaolo VonRuden, stand reverently next to their mothers who share with the congregation the Body and Blood of Christ—an enriching sense of communion!

**8:45:** Jean Vistica, long-time parishioner, was blessed March 8 as she planned her move to Sonora to be nearer her son and continue her recovery from complications following a hip replacement.

**10:30:** We welcome Frank Rozsnyoi, Monique Castell, and Pi Wang as new lectors. Our favorite baby, Thomas Klöle, has just turned one year old. We have watched him grow!

**12:00:** George Brown has been a faithful sacristan for many years for the Gregorian Mass community.

**12:15 Daily Mass:** A good place to spend the lunch hour.

## Meet the architects this week:

The principals of Lippert and Lippert Design, the architectural firm now contracted to design the renovations of the Thomas House, will meet with the STA Site Committee on Wednesday, March 25, at 7:30 p.m. in the basement hall of the Thomas House. Of particular interest to Lee and Carol Lippert is how the Site Committee anticipates the house will be used.

The Site Committee is looking forward to this opportunity to present its vision, ideas, and practical considerations to the Lipperts. For several years, the Site Committee has been gathering information from the various Mass communities (see column at left) about what each group would like to do

in the Thomas House. The general list of uses is straightforward:

- 1) hospitality after Mass;
- 2) adult spiritual education;
- 3) children's religious education;
- 4) community meetings;
- 5) office space for STA ministry groups;
- 6) funeral receptions;
- 7) wedding rehearsal dinners and bride prep space;
- 8) rental studio apartments for public occupancy/revenue generation for the parish.

These uses will dictate the scope of the renovations to the house. One primary addition will be a ramp to allow handicapped access to the main floor of the house; another will be the



St. Thomas Aquinas Church

installation of an accessible bathroom inside the house. Access to the second floor apartments is also important—should the stairway be turned around to allow a separate entry to the upstairs?

Come to the meeting this week and express your interest and ideas.

## STA Site Committee plans:

**Monthly Meeting:**  
4th Wednesday : Thomas House basement hall, 745 Waverley St.

**NEXT MEETING:**  
Wednesday, March 25  
7:30—9:00 pm

**Tentative agenda:**  
1. Meet the architects  
2. Church interior update  
3. Trees and paving on Homer

**Monthly newsletter:**  
Sunday before 4th Wednesday

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## Hackberry trees have come to Homer Street:



Three 7' tall Hackberry trees (*Celtis occidentalis*) have been planted by the City of Palo Alto along the Homer Street side of the church.

The Hackberry grows to a broad crown with arching branches, not unlike the American Elm. It will not block the view of the church at maturity. Well-suited to urban areas, it withstands wind and city conditions. It grows 40'-70' with a 50' spread and does well in full sun. It grows in all kinds of soil

and tolerates flooding and drought. It has a rounded, vase shape, with leaves shaped like spearheads, approximately 2 to 4 inches long and 1-2' wide. Its flower color is a faded green and blooms in April-May. The Hackberry produces a small (less than 1/2"), dark-red berry that turns purple as it matures. Inside is a pit, that when scraped clean, reveals an interesting net-like pattern. The fruit of the Hackberry is popular with winter birds, especially the cedar waxwing, mockingbird, and robin.

In earlier years, the Hackberry's tough, flexible wood was used for barrel hoops and many a pioneer cabin was equipped with durable hackberry wood flooring. The tree was first cultivated in 1636.

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS  
AQUINAS CHURCH SITE COMMITTEE**

751 Waverley Street  
Palo Alto, CA 94301

**St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:**

Jane Bahr	Helen Baumann	Phil Coates
Lorraine Dabney	Bill Mahrt	Bob March
Kieran McCarty	Mike McMahon	Mario Veloro
Kay Williams	and occasional others	

**Mission Statement:** The Site Committee for St. Thomas Aquinas Church works to encourage community-building within our six individual Mass communities, among our Mass communities, and within the larger parish community. We do this by enhancing our liturgies, exercising responsible stewardship of our facilities, and working to improve communications at all levels of our parish community.

Site committee meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the month in the basement hall of the Thomas House. All are welcome. Contact: Helen Baumann, 327-9236, hbbaumann@aol.com.

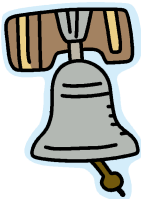
## From the church steps:

### **Garden design needed:**

Now that the hackberry trees are planted alongside Homer Street, we need to fill in the planting strip with surface paving of some sort. Some one in our several congregations must have interest in such a discrete project. Have you done a similar thing at your own home? Or if you are ignorant on this subject, what an opportunity to learn. Please come forward! Contact Helen Baumann, 327-9236, hbbaumann@aol.com.

### **Bell ringers needed:**

Have you wanted to pull the rope that rings our church bell? It is just as simple as that—pulling a rope—and a cadre of trained bell ringers could bring the bell to life. Be the ringer for the Mass you regularly attend. Contact Bill Peterson if you are interested in participating in this ringing ministry: 843-0866, beatrice.peterson@sbcglobal.net.



## Pastoral Stewardship Council March 11 meeting highlights:

Neither **Fr. George** nor **Fr. Jeronimo** was in attendance. Both were traveling: Fr. George to Israel with a group from the parish, and Fr. Jeronimo to Mexico for a family anniversary celebration.

The Pastoral Stewardship Council is planning its **annual retreat** for May 16 at the Lucie Stern Community Center. Members of the 14 Ministry Boards will attend, as will the parish staff.

The **St. Patrick's Day Dinner Dance**, March 14, was already sold out at the time of the PSC meeting.

### **Ministry reports:**

Jerry Lucha reported for the **Catechetical Ministry** that currently there are 91 stu-

dents (Grades K-5) attending at OLR and 142 students at SAG. OLR has 8 teachers or assistants and SAG has 12.

Laura Chiu reported for the **OLR Site Committee**. Stalwart OLR volunteers John and Micky Martin have been taken out of the fray temporarily due to John's recent illness and heart surgery. Other parishioners have stepped it to cover the many tasks at OLR that the Martins have "owned".

Lorraine Dabney presented the **STA Site Committee** report. Readers of *Steeple Talk* know are familiar with what she reported: progress on the Thomas House renovations; research and planning on the church interior; various exterior issues (trees, bubbling paint, bike rack).

## STA Interior Task Force update:

Investigation and research on the renovations to the interior of St. Thomas Aquinas church continue:

**Sound system:** Chairperson July Foley will contact the company that did the sound system at Nativity Church in Menlo Park for a consultation on the STA sound needs.

**Electrical system:** John Arnold will meet with a representative from Foley Electric in early April at the church to investigate the electrical systems.

**Altar renovation:** Kathy Schniedwind has offered to do some digital photo images of the altar to see if lowering it and restructuring the platform for improved safety would be appropriate and pleasing.

**Confessional kneeler:** Jan Dedek has volunteered to look into building a permanent kneeler in the one useful confessional, thus making it possible to reserve the refurbished (beautifully) needle-pointed kneelers for weddings.

**Refinishing pews:** Bill Voorhees will consult with Ray Mensing, master woodworker and parish volunteer, on the best way to refinish the pews.

**Hand rails on the altar:** Discussion on placement of (probably temporary) wrought iron hand rails on either side of the altar did not result in a consensus on this safety issue.

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, April 15, 7:30 p.m., SAG Hospitality Center. All are welcome!