



St. Peter's Abbey Newsletter



Vol. 33 No. 2 Summer and Fall 2012

St. Peter's College continues to plan for future

By Paul Paproski, OSB

The staff of St. Peter's College has only one major hurdle to overcome to bring the renovations of Michael Hall (college building) to an end, namely completing the fundraising to pay for the final renovation costs which are close to \$4 million. The success of the open house at the college, September 14, showed that goal can be reached, as there was much enthusiasm and support for the college. The public still considers St. Peter's College to be an important part of the local district and larger community, according to Robert Harasymchuk, college president.

"Fundraising is a necessary element of St. Peter's success. The Michael Hall renovations have necessitated financing that we hope will be supported through the generosity of our alumni and the community that supports, and depends on St. Peter's as a hub for sport, culture, recreation and of course learning," he said. "We are continually seeking ways to improve and expand our programs and services and this is possible with the assistance of our college supporters."

Abbot Peter, chancellor of the college, cut the ribbon to officially re-open Michael Hall after four years of renovations which cost \$15 million. The renovations began as a dream 10 years ago, he remarked. He expressed his appreciation to everyone who contributed. More than 100 attended the open house and ribbon cutting at St. Peter's College. They took part in tours of Michael Hall where they viewed displays of student art, science exhibits and alumni memorabilia.

"A number of the alumni commented on the amazing transformation that Michael Hall has undergone," Harasymchuk said in an interview. "Although the building looked new in appearance, they said it still had the same 'feel,' a testament



CELEBRATE RENOVATIONS – Abbot Peter Novectosky, OSB chancellor of St. Peter's College, cuts the ribbon, September 14, to officially complete renovations of Michael Hall (college building). Assisting are Dr. Gerry Junk, left, former student, and Sabre Teal, present student.

to the talent of architect Maurice Soloudre in blending the need for modern conveniences while maintaining the tradition and heritage of the building."

Renovations affected every floor of Michael Hall which was gutted, rebuilt and refurbished with new floors, walls, doors, lighting and windows. Doorway entrances were widened, bathrooms upgraded, and wiring brought to standard to enable information technology systems to be used. There are three new science labs on the basement floor. Students can study and visit in a student lounge and recreation room, and exercise in a modern fitness centre that is popular among students and staff. One of the most noticeable changes is the new elevator and shaft, a new addition to the west side of the building.

Renovations were made possible through the federal Knowledge Infrastruc-

ture grant program, the provincial Ministry of Advanced Education, donations from alumni and others who gave through to the capital campaign. Maurice Soloudre was the architect and Miners Construction was the project manager. Support was provided by the college board of governors and monks of St. Peter's Abbey.

Work is in progress to develop new courses and programs at St. Peter's College to help meet the ongoing educational needs of the public. The college is investigating the offering of more affordable lodging for residential students. The college presently offers classes in arts and science, business/commerce, agriculture and kinesiology, to fulfill the entry requirements to colleges such as Dentistry, Medicine, Nutrition, Pharmacy, Nursing, Vet-Medicine, Law and Education, or to complete the college's innovative writing diploma program.

A message from Abbot Peter's desk

Dear friends of St. Peter's Abbey,

Last newsletter I wrote about the recent deaths of four of our monks: Frs. Roman Schneider, Leo Hinz, Werner Renneberg and Andrew Britz. I'm happy to report that our confreres have sent replacements. As reported elsewhere in this newsletter, six candidates joined us this fall to explore their calling to a monastic vocation. We rejoice in how God is blessing us. A number of other men have visited us as live-ins for a week or more.

One of the highlights of this summer for me was the visit of a dozen great grand-nieces and grand-nephews of Abbot Bruno Doerfler, OSB, our first abbot who led the trek of explorers from Minnesota in 1902 to find a suitable location for a German-Catholic settlement in Western Canada. His relatives were anxious to discover more about him. I accompanied them to Rosthern which was the centre of immigration in 1903 and we retraced the path of Abbot Bruno and the first monks from there to Muenster. Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB also spent time with Abbot Bruno's relatives in our archives to help them learn all they could about their illustrious ancestor.

I was fortunate this year to visit five other monasteries. The tours began with visits to our two sister abbeys in Canada.

I visited Westminster Abbey in Mission, B.C., when I joined the bishops of Western and Northern Canada for a retreat there Jan. 5-8. Then, as an aside to a trip to the meeting of the Canadian Religious Conference Council in Montreal, Sr. Anne Lewans, OSU and I visited Fr. Alain Rodrigue in Sherbrooke, QC, a short distance from St-Benoît-du-Lac Abbey in Quebec. We visited the abbey March 12. Earlier, I visited St. Joseph's Abbey in St. Benedict, Louisiana for the Abbots Annual Workshop, Feb. 10-13. I also got to visit St. Martin's Abbey in Lacey, Wash., for a meeting of abbots and college presidents, June 18-20. Saint Peter's College President Rob Harasymchuk accompanied me to that meeting. Last of all, I visited Sant Anselmo Abbey in Rome for the Abbots Congress, Sept. 16-25.

This was my sixth Abbots Congress, which is held every four years. I don't think many abbots have been there that often. It's a time to discuss some important topics of common interest to Benedictines around the world and to meet other abbots, old and new. Some of our common concerns include: the staffing and financing of our international college of Sant Anselmo, our assistance to monasteries in developing countries (AIM: Aid to International Monasteries), our involvement in inter-faith dialogue with Buddhists and Muslim monastics (MID: Monastic Interfaith Dialogue), and a program for monastic



The three Canadian abbots at the Abbots Congress in Rome, Sept. 16-25, were, from left: John Braganza of Westminster, B.C.; Peter Novacosky of St. Peter's Abbey, Muenster; and Andre Laberge of St-Benoît-du-Lac in Quebec.

formators. We re-elected Notker Wolf, OSB as abbot primate, for a third term. We also had two speakers, from Germany and Australia, who explored the influence of the culture of individualism on monastic communities.

The trip to Rome also gave me an opportunity to visit Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB who is beginning his second year of theology studies at the Beda English College. After the congress we were able to take a day trip to explore the ruins of Pompeii, buried under volcanic ash in 79 AD.



Canadian Religious Council members, standing, from left: Fr. Alain Rodrigue, CMM, Sr. Anne Lewans, OSU, and Abbot Peter Novacosky, OSB. They visited St-Benoît-du-Lac Abbey, March 12, with Fr. Jacques Cote and Abbot Andre Laberge. St-Benoît-du-Lac Abbey celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2012, the second oldest Benedictine abbey in Canada.



A sign on the front lawn of the Benedictine sisters in Winnipeg advertised their centennial celebration this summer.

Fr. Rudolph celebrates 50 years of priesthood

By Paul Paproski, OSB

When Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB celebrated his first Mass at his home parish of St. Scholastica, Burr in June of 1962 he asked everyone to pray for him as he began his priesthood. The prayers of his family, friends and parishioners have sustained him during the past 50 years in his vocation as a priest and Benedictine monk of St. Peter's Abbey. Appreciation for his work was shown at a 50th anniversary celebration, June 3, at his former parish of St. Ann's in Annaheim. More than 275 people gathered for Mass and a program in his honor. A family gathering was held at St. Peter's Abbey later that day.

The importance of a faith life was taken for granted in Fr. Rudolph's family which centred its life around prayer and work on a mixed farm near Burr. Fr. Rudolph's parents, Joe and Anne, were active in St. Scholastica Church and the local Burr community. The Novecosky family prayed the rosary every day and prayed at meals and bedtime. The importance of a faith life influenced four of their seven children to enter religious life. Two left and were later married. Fr. Rudolph, OSB and Sr. Rita, OSU of the Ursulines in Humboldt continued in their religious vocations.

While living in Burr, Fr. Rudolph attended a one-room school, Willow Ridge, until Grade 9 and then St. Peter's High School from Grades 10 to 12. He took one year of liberal arts at St. Peter's College, Muenster and then decided to join the Benedictines at St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Rudolph said he admired the monks and their dedication in their calling to God. The next six years were spent in the seminary at St. John's Abbey in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Reminiscing about his past it becomes obvious Fr. Rudolph was very busy. He entered St. Peter's Abbey in 1955, two years before the abbey began a large building campaign. Fr. Rudolph learned a lot about construction, helping to build St. Scholastica convent, now a residence, in 1957; the college annex (present library) in 1958; Severin Hall (student residence) and gymnasium in 1959, the monastery building in 1962 and arena in 1965. The work was very enjoyable, he said. One of his jobs as a seminarian was helping on the abbey's



ENJOYING RECREATION – Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB enjoys keeping active, whether at recreation in the evenings, or helping out in many roles at St. Peter's Abbey, during the day. He celebrated his 50th anniversary to the priesthood this year.

mixed-grain farm and garden. "I did a lot of hoeing back then," he remembered.

Following ordination in June of 1962 Fr. Rudolph was appointed assistant to Fr. John Hable of Assumption Parish at Marysburg, and St. Bernard and Holy Trinity at Pilger. He was appointed prefect (supervisor) of St. Peter's High School and college from 1963 to 1972 when the high school closed. Fr. Rudolph worked as a high school teacher, giving instruction in geometry, algebra, trigonometry, Latin, agriculture, geology, and appreciation of English literature. He did not have a teaching diploma, just the text books to teach him all the necessary subject material. Having a love for sports, Fr. Rudolph served as sports director at St. Peter's High School, coaching hockey, volleyball, basketball and track and field. Fr. Rudolph built the track used for track and field meets, the soccer field and the bleachers, east of the arena, in 1967 as part of the centennial project.

Parish work has always been a joy of Fr. Rudolph who, in 1972, began assisting Fr. Werner Renneberg, OSB in the parishes at St. Gregor and Muenster. Fr. Rudolph became pastor of St. Gregory Parish in St. Gregor in 1979 and then St. Ann's at Annaheim beginning in 1987. He served as prior (second in command to the abbot) and sub-prior at St. Peter's Abbey, novice master and work coordinator for the novices and juniors. Between 1987 and 2008 he was the pastor for the two parishes at either Annaheim and St. Gregor, or Annaheim and Naicam, retiring in 2008 to St. Peter's Abbey. Since moving to the abbey Fr. Rudolph has served as prior, novice master/formation director and treasurer of St. Peter's Abbey. He was the oblate director for one year.

Fr. Rudolph is known by his former parishioners as being supportive of community events. He was often present at community sports events, local celebrations, graduations and homecomings. His support of the community was acknowledged at his 50th anniversary celebration in Annaheim. Fr. Rudolph is known for his expertise in wine making, especially chokecherry and Saskatoon wine. His parishioners often supplied him with berries, he said. Many appreciate his wisdom in his book *Homilies for Everyday Life*, first published in 2008.

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THANKSGIVING DISPLAY – A beautiful Thanksgiving display outside the abbey church of Sts. Peter and Paul Church greeted visitors to St. Peter's Abbey. The display celebrated the many blessings of the year. It was designed by the candidates in the vocations program of the abbey.

People and events around the abbey

Chronology for March-November 2012

March 9 — The Saskatchewan Catholic Women's League executive held a retreat at the abbey.

March 10 — Frs. Daniel Muyres, OSB and Paul Paproski, OSB attended the Diocesan Congress Day in Humboldt.

March 12 — Abbot Peter, OSB visited St-Benoît-du-Lac, a Benedictine monastery, celebrating its 100th anniversary. Abbot Peter had been attending a Canadian Religious Conference meeting in Montreal.

March 17 — Brs. Basil Schaan, OSB and Kurt Van Kuren, OSB attended the annual general meeting of the Marysburg Organic chapter held at the abbey. Abbot Peter Novecosky and Fr. Daniel Muyres attended a session on green energy. It was held at St. Peter's College.

March 17-23 — Fr. Demetrius Wasyluniuk, OSB gave a retreat at Good Shepherd Parish in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

March 17 — Neil Adam, oblate, of Allan returned to the abbey as a working guest.

Mid-March runoff began as the snow melted. Efforts were not made to fill the reservoir with runoff water. The abbey is connected to SaskWater.

March 21 — Christopher Weber of Nova Scotia spent a week as a live-in at the abbey.

March 27 — Anthony Victor of Singapore spent a week as a live-in at the abbey.



TRAVELLERS — Jonathan Jupke, 19, and Isabella Mueller, 20, of The Harz Mountains, Germany visited St. Peter's Abbey for two weeks in April. They worked part-time at the abbey and toured the local area. The Germans travelled across Canada and worked in various businesses, including farms and organic farms.

March 31 — Oblate Day was held at St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB gave a PowerPoint presentation on The Twelve Steps to Prayer.

April 2 — Several monks attended the Chrism Mass at the new Holy Family Cathedral in Saskatoon.

April 6 — The third snowstorm in a month blanketed the area on Good Friday. Once-barren roads were covered in six inches of snow and ice. Many Good Friday Services were cancelled.

April 13 — Haus of Stitches of Humboldt sponsored a knitting class for about 20 people.

April 16 — Twenty volunteer farm



ARCHIVES — Frances Swyripa, history professor of the University of Alberta, documents files and photos in St. Peter's Abbey Archives. She worked in the archives from January to the end of April.

workers from around the world attended Agriventure at the abbey.

April 20 — **W O O F E R s** (W o r l d w i d e Opportunities on Organic Farms) Johnathan and Isabella of Germany left after a two-week stay at the abbey. They resided in Placid Hall while working here part-time.

April 21 — More than 100 local leaders met at St. Peter's College to plan for the local infrastructure and population expansion expected during the next decade.



ANNUAL RETREAT — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB, right, welcomes Fr. Edward Mazich, OSB of St. Vincent Archabbey, Pennsylvania to St. Peter's Abbey. Fr. Edward led the annual retreat of the abbey, May 13 to 17.

April 21 — Some Saskatchewan Roughriders came to St. Peter's College campus during a football camp attended by 100 students. Seventy Girl Guides held a meeting here.

April 30 — Francis Swyripa returned home to Edmonton after working four months in the abbey archives.

May 1 — Fr. Bernard Stauber received his dispensation from monastic vows. He lives in Humboldt.

May 13-17 — Fr. Edward Mazich, OSB of St. Vincent Archabbey, Pennsylvania led the annual retreat of St. Peter's Abbey.

May 19 — Benedictines and Ursulines joined the Elizabethans at a celebration com-



COMMEMORATE CENTENNIAL — Benedictines and Ursulines joined the Elizabethans in Humboldt at a celebration commemorating the closing of the 100th Anniversary of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth Foundation in Canada. The celebration, May 19, began with Mass, followed by a banquet and prayers in the Elizabethan cemetery. It ended with reflections by superiors of all three congregations on the status of their orders and future plans.



REMEMBER DECEASED — A special prayer service was held at the cemetery of the Elizabethan Sisters, May 19, at the commemoration of the closing of the 100th Anniversary of the St. Elizabethan Foundation in Canada. Prayers were led by: from left, Sr. Philomena Dobmeier, superior of the Elizabethans, Prior Rudolph Novecosky, OSB, Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen, and Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB.

memorating the closing of the 100th Anniversary of the Foundation in Canada. Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen was the celebrant at the anniversary Mass in the Elizabethan convent, Humboldt.

May 22 — The 4th Degree KCs of the Abbot Severin Gerken Assembly 2166 joined the Benedictines for supper. They presented the Benedictines with an appreciation certificate and \$700 in recognition of the deceased Benedictines who served as friars of the assembly.

May 22-May 30 — Br. Anthony Nguyen, OSB took organ lessons at New Westminster, the Benedictine monastery in Mission, B.C.



RECOGNIZE MONKS — Ron Koberinski of Lanigan, Faithful Navigator, centre, and Daniel Loehr of Watson, Faithful Purser, left, of the Abbot Severin Gerken Assembly 2166 present Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB a certificate and \$700 check in appreciation and in memory of deceased Benedictine priests and faithful friars (chaplains) of the Severin Gerken Assembly. The presentation was May 22 at St. Peter's Abbey. The deceased faithful friars include: Frs. George Brodner, Alfred Engele, Leo Hinz, Francis Lohmer, Werner Renneberg, Florian Renneberg and Abbot Jerome Weber.

May 23-28 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB attended the bi-annual assembly of the Canadian Religious Conference in Montreal. He was elected to the national council.

May 24-June 3 — The 10th annual Saskatchewan Stitches Conference was held at St. Peter's Abbey. Some 250 attended classes and sessions during the event.

June 8-10 — Br. Kurt Van Kuren, OSB attended a Religion and Science Conference at Portsmouth Abbey, Rhode Island.

June 11 — Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB returned to St. Peter's Abbey from his seminary studies in Rome.

June 18-20 — The Eparchy of Saskatchewan held its Annual Clergy Retreat. The director was Fr. Michael Kwiatkowski of Winnipeg.

June 18-20 — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and St. Peter's College President Robert Harasymchuk attended a meeting of college presidents and abbots at St. Martin's Abbey in Lacey, Washington.

June 20-23 — Fr. Jose (Joe) Cabral of the Archdiocese of Winnipeg stopped at the abbey, while on route to Edmonton to visit relatives. He first came to the abbey when he was a seminarian at St. Pius Seminary in Saskatoon in the mid-1980s. He had been serving the parish at Roblin, Manitoba and was transferred to Abernathy near Dauphin. Fr. Jose helped the monks with their outdoor work.

June 26 — The St. Peter's Alternate High School Program Graduation and Awards Night was held in the Jerome Assembly



Br. Cosmas Epifano standing in front of the Beda English College in Rome where he is studying theology.

Room. The celebration was the last for the high school which closed after 39 years.

June 26-27 — Strong winds and rain caused a power outage, broke branches and knocked over trees.

July 6 — Six candidates of St. Peter's Abbey were approved for the fall.

July 7 — Sisters Louise Hinz, OSU of Brazil and Bernadine Fetter, OSU joined the monks for lunch. They spoke of their work in Brazil and northern Saskatchewan.

July 11 — Abbot Peter presided at the Feast of St. Benedict. He acknowledged the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Fr. Rudolph, OSB and installed Br. Cosmas, OSB seminarian, as a lector.

July 12 — Joseph Chouinard, 67, returned to Regina after spending a week with the community as a live-in.

July 12 — Peter Froess, a friend of St. Peter's Abbey, was honored with a cake and coffee on his 90th birthday.



CELEBRATE 90TH — Peter Froess, a friend of St. Peter's Abbey, was honored by monks and staff with a cake and coffee, July 12, on his 90th birthday.

People and events around the abbey

July 21 — Oblate Day was held at St. Peter's Abbey. Guest speakers were Jim and Marion Penna of Saskatoon.

July 23-24 — The Knights of Columbus sponsored Priests' Sports Days at St. Peter's Abbey. Thirty-two priests and seminarians came from the three dioceses in the province. They were assisted by eight volunteers with the Knights of Columbus.

July 25-July 30 — Freda and Ardel Paproski of Hudson Bay picked 12 gallons of saskatoons from the abbey Saskatoon orchard. Last year they helped pick 114 gallons. Ardel celebrated his 82nd birthday, July 27 along with Freda and their son Fr. Paul, OSB.



CELEBRATE ANNIVERSARIES — Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB congratulates Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB, left, on his 60th anniversary to monastic profession, and Fr. Richard Meidl on his 25th anniversary. A special Mass commemorating the anniversaries was held August 6 on the Feast of the Transfiguration.

Aug. 6 — Fr. Joseph Ackerman, OSB and Fr. Richard Meidl, OSB were recognized on their 60th and 25th anniversaries, respectively, of their professions to monastic life. The anniversaries were celebrated on the Feast of the Transfiguration. A special Mass and dinner were held in their honor. The abbey was honored with guests Mother Angelita G. Marave, MACE of Sydney, Australia, foundress of the Missionary Apostles of Christ in the Eucharist. With her was Sr. Maybelle V. dela Cruz, MACE of Humboldt, youth ministry co-ordinator at St. Augustine Roman Catholic Church.

Aug. 10-15 — Twelve grand-nieces and grand-nephews of Abbot Bruno Doerfler, OSB visited from Oregon and Minnesota to follow the footsteps of their illustrious ancestor. One was a seminarian.

Aug. 19 — Abbot Peter Novecosky,

OSB represented St. Peter's Abbey at the 100th anniversary celebrations of the Benedictine Sisters in Winnipeg.

Aug. 20 — Jordon and Donna Bergermann were honored at St. Peter's Abbey for their 30 years of support for Engagement Encounter. They were presented a certificate with a papal blessing by Pope Benedict and certificate from Engagement Encounter. Engagement Encounter at St. Peter's Abbey began in 1981. Jordan and

Donna were the first presenting couple. The late Fr. Leo Hinz, OSB was the first presenting priest for the Muenster Engagement Encounter.

Sept. 1 — Friends and relatives came to join the monks for the annual potato-picking day.

Sept. 7 — Br. Anthony

began his second year of monthly weekend studies in lay formation held in Saskatoon.

Sept. 16-Oct. 1 — Abbot Peter attended the Abbots Conference in Rome. He visited with Br. Cosmas Epifano, OSB, seminarian at Beda College in Rome.



Br. Anthony Nguyen



ENGAGEMENT ENCOUNTER — Jordon and Donna Bergermann were honored by Engagement Encounter, August 20, at St. Peter's Abbey for their 30 years of support for Engagement Encounter. They were presented a certificate with a papal blessing by Pope Benedict and certificate from Engagement Encounter. Presenting the certificate is Fr. Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB, volunteer with Engagement Encounter.

Demetrius Wasylyniuk, OSB and Br. Pierre Rouillard, OSB.

Oct. 12 — Ten religious superiors in Saskatchewan joined Abbot Peter for a meeting at St. Peter's Abbey. They joined the monks for Vespers and supper.



TWO BISHOPS — Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon stands with Bishop Michael Wiwchar, CSsR, retired bishop of the Eparchy. They attended the annual retreat of the eparchy, June 18 to 20, at St. Peter's Abbey.

Sept. 27 — Fr. Paul Paproski, OSB of St. Peter's College Campus Ministry presented a PowerPoint on the Benedictines to students and staff of St. Peter's College. Assisting were Fr.

Oct. 16 — The monks held their annual Chapter Meeting.

Oct. 17-18 — Bishop Bryan Bayda, CSsR of the Eparchy of Saskatoon visited the abbey. He was the guest speaker, Oct. 18, for Lunch with Benedict, a luncheon sponsored by St. Peter's College Campus Ministry.

Nov. 3 — Oblate Day was held at St. Peter's Abbey. Pol Zwart of Saskatoon was the guest speaker.

Alternative high school has final awards night

By Paul Paproski, OSB

The final graduation and awards night of St. Peter's Alternative High School Program, June 26, was left in the dark when heavy rains and high winds caused a power outage in the Muenster area. The darkness didn't dampen the enthusiasm of those gathered in the Jerome Assembly Room of St. Peter's Abbey. The program continued with presentations of certificates and awards to students, and speeches by guests. Arrangements were even made to find a generator to power a video presentation of staff and students by Yvonne Gueguen, work Ed co-ordinator/teacher.

The final class of five students from grades 10 to 12 was praised for the dedication and commitment given to learning. Kotie Fisher of Watson, who has been with the alternative high school program for four years, was the lone Grade 12 student and graduate. The other students were: Keenan Boyko of Wakaw, Grade 11; Joshua Canevaro of Humboldt, Mackenzie Peyton of Drake and Christopher White of Lanigan, Grade 10. The program, which opened in 1973 at St. Peter's College, will be relocating to LeRoy.

"Each one of these young gentlemen has had his challenges over the year. Each one has stayed on track. Sometimes it was a wobbly track, but they persisted in addressing their challenges and have had a measure of success," Principal Lorraine Jansen said. "Each young man has grown

in maturity, confidence, and self-knowledge. Each is learning what it takes to be responsible and to navigate life. I want to thank each of you students for your cooperation, for not giving up, and for the personality that each brings to our program. I am proud of you all," she commented.

Jansen pointed out that the dedication and teamwork of the staff helped make the high school program a tremendous success. The staff included Yvonne Gueguen, work education co-ordinator of Humboldt; Carol Brons, secretary of Lake Lenore; educational assistants Muriel Wall of Drake and Florence Schreiner of Marysburg. Marilee Sterner, principal of Muenster School, and Cheryl Rowe of Muenster School worked with the program, she added. Drivers Armella Knittig, Crystal Boyko, and Muriel Wall provided more than transportation; they were the eyes and ears beyond the school, she remarked. Other helpers were Stephen LaPointe, student counselor; Br. Basil Schaan, OSB, work mentor; Maury Wrubleski, career counselor, and Pierre April, janitor. Linda Mattock represented the school on the division board and executive council.

"You've heard it said that it takes a whole village to raise a child. Well, the people I have specifically mentioned, along with the support of their parents, families, St. Peter's monastic and college community, Horizon School Division, and our employers have been a part of that village. I thank all parties for their part in helping to meet the needs of these young people. We celebrate the fact that our program has been privileged to be housed on the grounds of St. Peter's College and Abbey. What a wonderful place this has been to engage in learning, and what wonderful support we have had from the monastic and college community.



FINAL YEAR – Lorraine Jansen of LeRoy, principal of St. Peter's Alternate High School, reflects on the final days of the alternate high school in Michael Hall of St. Peter's College. The alternate high school closed at the end of the 2011-2012 school year.

We've had access to various facilities, worked side by side with the monks, shared in communal meals, and soothed our souls in the tranquility of the beautiful surroundings," Jansen said.

The alternative high school program was founded in 1973 by Jean Warner, supervisory assistant in the Humboldt Rural School Division, and Sr. Miriam Spenrath, OSU religious educator for St. Peter's Abbey. Sr. Miriam served as a teacher-principal of the high school for 23 years, retiring in 1996. Students have enrolled in the program from local communities and other centres of Wakaw, Lanigan, Wadena and Wynyard. They have come as far away as Uranium City and Ontario. The program has had different titles, first known as St. Peter's Special Ed, then St. Peter's Pre-Vocational, St. Peter's High School, St. Peter's Alternate High School and finally St. Peter's Alternate High School Program. In spite of the name changes, the overall goal has been to equip students with necessary tools to be successful in the work place and to be contributing members of society. The work experience component, over the past 39 years, has enjoyed the support of 300-plus individuals and businesses from Humboldt and surrounding communities. The local employers have provided each student 10 work placements which number 2,148 work placements.

"I know that each one of our students will remember St. Peter's with fondness when they think about their time here."



END OF AN ERA – Staff of St. Peter's Alternate High School share one of their final meals together in Michael Hall of St. Peter's College as they prepare to move the school to LeRoy. The staff members include: from left, Principal Lorraine Jansen of LeRoy; Florence Schreiner of Marysburg and Muriel Wall of Drake, educational assistants; Carol Brons of Lake Lenore, secretary; and Yvonne Gueguen of Humboldt, work Ed coordinator/teacher.

10th Annual Sewing Conference held at Abbey

By Paul Paproski, OSB

A creative idea 12 years ago by Wendy Toye of Haus of Stitches in Humboldt culminated in one of the most successful sewing conferences to be held in Saskatchewan. Wendy brought several women together at her business in 2000 to learn sewing techniques. She realized there was a lot of interest in the craft and decided to hold further workshops. She moved the workshops to St. Peter's Abbey in 2002 to meet the demands for accommodations. Wendy's work culminated in the holding of the 10th annual Saskatchewan Stitches Conference, May 24 to June 3.

"The conference was a huge success. Everything went extremely well. We have grown from five days of classes and 60 participants to 11 days of classes and 250 participants in 10 years," she said. The interest in the 10th anniversary was evidenced by an increase in registration of 100 from the previous year. The anniversary featured a display of 50 pieces of work in the Jerome Assembly Room for viewing. Viewers voted on their favorite work. Prizes, donated from suppliers, were awarded to the winners.

The display was the backdrop to a gala evening where conference participants reminisced over that past 10 great years. They were entertained by Beverly Johnson of Hamilton, Ontario who was the original instructor in sewing 12 years ago. Beverly has taught bra making for the last 10 years at the abbey. More than 100 guests attended the evening and



STITCHES CONFERENCE – Participants in the 10th annual Saskatchewan Stitches Conference, May 24 to June 3, at St. Peter's Abbey pose for a photo. More than 250 attended workshops, seminars, lectures and demonstrations in, among other things, sewing, quilting, knitting and rug hooking.

enjoyed the exhibit, entertainment and refreshments, Wendy remarked.

"The abbey seemed like the perfect location for the conferences. I have known about the abbey all my life having grown up in the area, and ever since I started the store I wanted to do some kind of event there," she said. The abbey has a central location in the province and is close to Haus of Stitches. Fr. Demetrius, guest master, informed Wendy that space was available at the beginning of June the following year. That time of the year was ideal, Wendy said, since seeding was completed and people had not left on summer holidays. The facilities at the abbey more than provided for the needs of classroom space, meals and sleeping accommodations. Renovations have since taken place in the guest wing and college and they have improved lighting and plug-in access for sewing machines.

The air exchange system in the college building has made the working environment more pleasant.

Beverly Johnson was the first instructor to offer classes at Haus of Stitches and she continues to be one of the most popular, Wendy remarked. Beverly once taught classes all over North America and now confines her work to the abbey and her school in Hamilton, Ontario. Other instructors come from Saskatchewan, Alberta and as far away as New York City; Denver, Colorado and Keller, Texas. Classes are offered in everything from bra making, fibre and collage art, and fabric scarves to quilt-making. A recent addition, rug hooking, has been growing in popularity.

Five years after beginning her conferences Wendy decided to add knitting to the line-up. She contacted Lily Chin of New York City, one of the best-known instructors in that field. Lily's classes were a huge success. Jodi Barrows of Keller, Texas and Marci Baker of Denver, Colorado, who teach quilting, met years earlier on the Jane Pauley Show. They were pleased to meet again at St. Peter's Abbey.

"Instructors are eager to be invited back once they have attended," Wendy said. "They love the facility here and are impressed every year with the changes.



Display at the Gala evening of the 10th Annual Saskatchewan Stitches Conference at St. Peter's Abbey.

Oblates find peace in Rule of St. Benedict

By Paul Paproski, OSB

St. Benedict was a man who had a wise and discerning heart. His authoritarianism was practical wisdom, immersed in justice and mercy, Jim Penna of Saskatoon said to the Benedictine Oblates at a gathering, July 21. The wisdom of St. Benedict flowed from his prayer, Penna said to 35 attending a gathering of Oblates of St. Peter's Abbey. Jim and Marion Penna were guest speakers for Oblate Day. Oblates are lay persons who are attached to a Benedictine monastery. They strive to deepen their baptism by living the Rule of St. Benedict, the spiritual guide of Benedictines.

The Rule of St. Benedict is a means of helping Oblates to immerse themselves in the Christian life and become the body of Christ, Penna commented. Oblates are challenged to become radical Christians who strive for unity and harmony with their inner selves, with others and nature. The Sacred Constitution on the Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, #48) of Vatican Council II echoed this, he remarked. The document encourages everyone to grow into a fuller union with God. This union naturally leads them to becoming of service to others. St. Paul



OBLATES – Jim and Marion Penna were guest speakers, July 21, at Oblate Day held at St. Peter's Abbey. They discussed their role in living the Rule of St. Benedict as Oblates for more than 30 years.

spoke about this transformation into the body of Christ when he exclaimed, "The life I live now is not my own; Christ is living in me." (Galatians 2:20) Oblates let Christ live in them by praying in Christ, seeing in Christ, suffering, working and loving in Christ. The ultimate goal of an oblate is confirmation in Christ, he said.

The Prologue (21) of the Rule of St. Benedict speaks of serving others

through good deeds, Jim remarked. The Pennas have strived to live a life of service through their involvement in their parish of St. Mary's and the larger community. Their work, Jim said, has been carried out with the belief that each of us is called to create human conditions for peace, justice, freedom and solidarity. This vocation does not come easy and the Rule exclaims this by stating that perfect charity comes when we endure another's weaknesses. (RB 72:5). Endurance is possible when we strive to be like Jesus, to live as Jesus and love as Jesus loved, he remarked.

Marion Penna recalled 30 years ago when she and Jim were searching for something more in their spiritual life. Marion read *The Story of a Soul*, the autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux. The book spoke of a loving God which was a contrast to the very legalistic perception she had of God. Marion said there was the perception that God was very judgmental and she was afraid that the littlest sin could cause one to lose salvation.

The Pennas were introduced to the Oblates by Fr. Albert Ruetz, OSB who was the director. Fr. Albert and Abbot Jerome Weber encouraged them to become Oblates. There was little instruction on living as an Oblate, but she remembers being encouraged to live it to the best of her ability. The first word of the Rule of St. Benedict, "listen," stood out as an important guide to begin their vocation. It is a good reminder of how we need to live in the present moment where one meets God. The Rule speaks of a balanced life of work and prayer and that continues to be a goal for Marion.

It is always a challenge to follow the daily prayer encouraged by the Rule of St. Benedict, she commented. A prayer life encourages one to listen, be silent, humble, and bring peace to the world. Listening means going deep within your heart, she said. Scripture is the best way to come to Christ and prayer keeps one in touch with Christ. One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is peace and Marion strives to be a promoter of peace, within herself, within her family and the larger community. Dorothy Day, who is being considered for sainthood, was an oblate who spent much of her life promoting peace, she said.



NEW LOOK – A new elevator gives a fresh look to the west side of the refurbished St. Peter's College. A miniature bird house in the shape of Michael Hall (college building) was designed and built by John Firman, Miners Constructor, project manager for the renovations. The idea for the bird house and donation of materials came from college employees Rehman Khan and Pierre April.

Priests participate in Sports Days activities

By Paul Paproski, OSB

There are some priests in Saskatchewan who still have a competitive edge in sports such as soccer, basketball, volleyball and ping pong. They demonstrated their skills at the Priests Sports Days, July 23 and 24, at St. Peter's Abbey. Among them were Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen and Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB.

Rainfall during the two days didn't dampen the spirits of the 40 participants, 32 of whom were priests and seminarians, and eight, Knights of Columbus. The activities were moved indoors to the St. Peter's College gymnasium and foyer. The Jerome Assembly Room, next to Sts. Peter and Paul Church, was used for socializing and games. The indoor facilities at the abbey met all the needs for activities, according to Denis Carignan of North Battleford, State Secretary of the Knights of Columbus.

"Everyone enjoyed the activities of ladder golf, soccer, volleyball, basketball, cards, darts, and ping pong. There's enough of a selection of activities to suit all ages, skills, and interest levels," he remarked.

"It's great to hold this event at the abbey and St. Peter's College. We get to participate with the Benedictines in the Mass and the prayers. We also get to meet the Benedictines and enjoy socializing with them. Fr. Demetrius, OSB is always very helpful at organizing and coordinating the activities with the facil-



PRIESTS' SPORTS DAY – Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB and Saskatoon Bishop Donald Bolen were among the participants in a basketball game held during Priests' Sports Day, July 23 and 24, at St. Peter's Abbey. The Knights of Columbus sponsored the event attended by 32 priests and seminarians in the province and eight members of the Knights of Columbus.

ities. The location is fairly central. The facilities are perfect for the activities. We are provided with excellent meals and sleeping accommodations at a very reasonable cost."

Abbot Peter Novecosky and Bishop Donald Bolen both expressed their appreciation to the Knights of Columbus for bringing the priests of Saskatchewan together for two days of fun and socializing. The event was another great way to build the church community, they said.

"The idea for the Priests Sports Day

came from a conversation with some of the international priests serving in the Archdiocese of Regina, talking about how good it would be to get together with their compatriots serving in other Saskatchewan dioceses," said Bishop Don Bolen. "We came up with the idea of an annual Priests Sports

Day, but probably wouldn't have done much about it. Happily the Knights of Columbus got wind of the idea and took it on. They have been wonderful in getting us organized and started to establish a little tradition of coming together over the soccer pitch, ping pong table, etc. I'm also immensely grateful to the abbey for hosting the event with their ever welcoming spirit. We had a great day, and hopefully an increasing number of priests will take part in the event in the future."

Carignan's experience in working as a Phys. Ed teacher and consultant enabled him to organize the first Priests Sports Days at St. Peter's Abbey last year. He has had the opportunity to organize many "sports days" at the school level. The Priests Sports Days, he said, was similar to a school sports or activity days. He won't be involved in spearheading Priests Sports Days next year, but will be part of the Knights of Columbus volunteer team. The numbers who took part last year, 32 priests and seven Knights, were largely the same as this year. There was one more Knights of Columbus volunteer helping this year.

"I think that it is a very nice opportunity for priests from all four dioceses to get together, socialize and have some fun. I do hope that it grows."



LADDER GOLF – Participants of Priests' Sports Day, July 23 and 24, at St. Peter's Abbey enjoy a game of ladder golf. Other activities included soccer, volleyball, basketball, cards, darts, and ping pong.

Relatives of Abbot Bruno visit St. Peter's Abbey

By Paul Paproski, OSB

Twelve relatives of Abbot Bruno Doerfler, the first abbot of St. Peter's Abbey, visited the home of their famous great-uncle for a week in early August. The group of great-nieces, great-nephews, one great-great nephew and one great-great niece from Minnesota and Oregon came to learn about their famous uncle and his role in helping to build St. Peter's Colony. Abbot Peter Novecosky, OSB took them on tours to routes once travelled by Abbot Bruno. Abbot Peter, on one excursion, read excerpts from the book, *Quest for a New Homeland*, a reprint of Abbot Bruno's journal describing his travels. Some great-nieces read Bruno's letters in St. Peter's Abbey archives. The letters gave them a deeper glimpse into their great-uncle's personality and the issues he faced. Abbot Bruno, who had a farming background and knowledge of good soil, chose the site of St. Peter's Colony that was established in 1903. He died in 1919 after contracting the flu.

April Justin of Otsego, Minnesota, a great-great niece, said she remembers seeing a picture of Abbot Bruno at her grandparents' home. The picture is actually a print of the painting of St. Paul in St. Peter's Church, Muenster. The artist, Count Berthold Imhoff, was a friend of Bruno and used the image of Bruno for the portrait of St. Paul. April enjoys history and has had an interest in the work of Abbot Bruno for many years. She read *Quest for a New Homeland* before coming to St. Peter's Abbey.

"His writings helped me get to know him. He wrote with good knowledge of many different topics and gave detailed accounts of his experience on the journey. I was impressed with that man," she said. April's grandfather, Frank, a nephew of Abbot Bruno, was only four years old when his uncle died. Frank was raised by a single mother after his dad died in 1918. Frank's strong faith was first nurtured by his mother, Ida and her father, Adam.

"Adam, I am told, expected all of his children to give religious life a chance. Three daughters followed a religious vocation and two sons became priests: Abbot Bruno Doerfler, OSB, and Father Hilary Doerfler, OSB. I consider myself part of the legacy of faith that my great-great



RELATIVES OF BRUNO – The relatives of Abbot Bruno, OSB the first Abbot of St. Peter's Abbey, stand near the grave of Bruno at St. Peter's Abbey monastic cemetery. The Americans visited the abbey in August and toured the former St. Peter's Colony. They travelled to sites once observed by Bruno as he helped establish the colony.

grandfather left. Abbot Bruno is part of that same legacy." Among the favorite experiences in Canada for April were: visiting St. Peter's Parish and Abbot Bruno's grave; touring a room of old books, meeting the Benedictines, and hearing Abbot Peter call, "two minutes, two minutes" as he tried to get everyone back in the tour van.

"My dad commented, 'The people made the trip.' We were greeted with such kindness by the priests and brothers at the abbey, the people who took time to share stories and information; those who welcomed us into their homes and really everyone we met. One of the Elizabethan Sisters stopped me in the hallway as we were leaving their convent in Humboldt to share with me about Abbot Bruno. She acknowledged that we were his descendants and told me how thankful she was that he brought them to Saskatchewan. I was touched that she took the time to share that with me," April said.

Donald and Paula Justen of Aitkin, Minnesota said they came to St. Peter's Abbey without any knowledge of Donald's great uncle Abbot Bruno. They left in awe of what Abbot Bruno was able to accomplish with God's grace. One memorable experience of their visit was having lunch outside while waiting for the ferry at St. Laurent. They wondered how often Abbot

Bruno ate outside on the prairies. The Justens said they enjoyed praying with the monks of St. Peter's Abbey and sharing meals with them. They felt very welcome and were grateful to Abbot Peter for taking the time to help them see the former colony.

Barbie Justen of Grand Ronde, Oregon, a great niece of Abbot Bruno, remembers hearing about how proud her father was of Abbot Bruno. Her father often pointed to the family of Bruno as an example of how to live a faithful life.

Barbie had read the book, *Quest For a New Homeland*, before visiting St. Peter's Abbey. She said she was impressed with the many activities, outings & fellowship during her stay.

"I felt such a connection to my great uncle Bruno. It was just like going back in time and seeing what it must have been like to enter this vast land, and then what all those amazing people who came there afterwards, added to it to make this colony develop and grow. I was also very touched by the visit to the Elizabethan sisters and knowing that they were leaving Humboldt shortly. One of the sisters began to cry and that really got to me. Never short on tears myself, I began to cry also and realized that these ladies had come to this area at the request of my great uncle, and that it was nice that some of his descendants were there when they were making their exit." Barbie's favorite site at the abbey was the grave of Abbot Bruno.

Kay (Justen) Husome Pelletier of Bloomington, Minnesota, a great-niece of Abbot Bruno, said she was very appreciative of the Benedictine hospitality. She believes her group is not the first of the Doerfler descendants to visit St. Peter's Abbey. Some relatives were there possibly when her mother visited the abbey in August of 1983.

Fr. Rudolph had a love for the outdoors

Continued from page 3

There are some outdoor enthusiasts who remember Fr. Rudolph's love for berry picking, bird watching, duck hunting and fishing. He often went on fishing trips at Deschambault Lake and Canoe Lake with Frs. Florian, OSB and Werner Renneberg, OSB. He is an avid reader, as well. St. Peter's Abbey held a special celebration for Fr. Rudolph's 50th anniversary in July. Fr. Lawrence DeMong, OSB recounted how Fr. Rudolph was athletic. Once he entertained his students by walking across the classroom on his hands.

The most enjoyable part of Fr. Rudolph's life, overall, has been his work as a pastor. "I have always liked parish work. The people have always been supportive, very affirming," he remarked. Many people don't realize that Benedictine priests were often asked to work in parishes outside the former St. Peter's Abbey. Sometimes diocesan priests

asked the Benedictines to serve in their parishes when the diocesan priests went on holidays. Fr. Rudolph remembers filling in at parishes at Watrous and Quill Lake and as far away as Kamloops, B.C.

Asked about differences in the attitudes of parishioners over the past 50 years, he noted that fewer people are attending church. Many from the older generation have died or retired outside small communities. The decline in church attendance can be attributed, as well, to fewer young people living in small communities and having fewer children. He noted that there are many young people who have a good impression of the church. When the director of education informed the school in Anaheim that students could no longer attend Mass during regular school hours, it was agreed the students could attend Mass during noon hour. The students' support for Mass was very strong, he commented.

Fr. Rudolph suffered a life-changing moment in November 3 of 1977 when he was injured in the back with a shotgun

while hunting ducks. He was with his brother Tony, Fr. Florian Renneberg, OSB and Fr. Edward Benning, OSB at the time. They had spotted ducks on a stubble field about 10 miles north of Carmel. Fr. Rudolph placed decoys in a slough and quickly left when he saw the ducks returning. He ran with his loaded shotgun, forgetting that he had failed to put on the safety catch. As he ran his little finger hit the trigger and the gun went off and shot in the air. The gun recoiled out of his hand and fell behind him going off a second time, shooting him in the back.

During his convalescence in the Royal University Hospital Fr. Rudolph experienced the powerful awareness of God's presence. After six and one half months he was well enough to return to the abbey. He went through long periods of pain and depression. Surgery in 1987 relieved him of most of his pain. He is able to walk short distances using crutches which enabled him to return to parish work a year and a half after leaving the hospital. It is a humbling experience to be dependent on others, he said.

"I began to realize that people who have to help the handicapped are given the opportunity to grow in charity. That realization made it easier for me to be dependent on others," he remarked. Fr. Rudolph believes God has blessed him throughout his years as a priest and is grateful for his vocation.

Six candidates enter St. Peter's

**By Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB
Formation Director**

Our monastery is experiencing new life with the influx of six candidates. The candidacy program began at the beginning of September and will last for six months. During this time the candidates live in the monastery and follow the monastic schedule. Classes are given on monastic customs, the Catholic Catechism and Scripture. At the end of the candidacy program the candidates can apply for acceptance into the novitiate which lasts for one year. The novitiate has a more intensive study program.

The names of the candidates are as follows: 1. Andreas Hofer of New Zealand; 2. Peter van Ginkel of Winnipeg; 3. Anthony

Victor of Singapore; 4. Christopher Weber of Ontario; 5. Linden Predy of Saskatoon; and 6. Dominic Leo of Vancouver.

There are many reasons why men seek monastic life. Some of the suggestions are that monastic life: allows us to submit ourselves totally to God's will; offers a balanced life of work and prayer; gives the opportunity to respond to an inner yearning for God; gives joy; helps to serve God in a complete fashion; and is a tried and tested path to seek God. The decision to become an ordained priest or a brother is made after the novitiate.

Please keep these candidates in your prayers and also our monastery so that God will continue to bless us as he has in the past.



MONASTIC CANDIDATES — Fr. Rudolph Novecosky, OSB, formation director at St. Peter's Abbey, welcomes six candidates to the abbey. They include: from left, Dominic Leo of Vancouver, Christopher Weber of Ontario, Peter van Ginkel of Winnipeg, Linden Predy of Saskatoon, Andreas Hofer of New Zealand, and Anthony Victor of Singapore.

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