Neighborhoods in New York are constantly changing, but in the streets around the Choir School, the change has been dramatic. Can you find us in this photo? (Answer on page 5.)
HEADMASTER'S REFLECTION

As we approach the conclusion of our Centennial celebrations, we may reflect upon the qualities that make Saint Thomas Choir School unique. When T. Tertius Noble reached the New World in 1913, he was entrusted by the Reverend Dr. Ernest Stires to found a school which would train boys at the highest standards of the Anglican choral tradition. The boys' musical excellence, in turn, would make possible the unsurpassed quality of Saint Thomas's choral worship, an element which would come to define our church. Aided by the financial and organizational acumen of Charles Steele, the school finally opened in 1919.

Noble specifically mandated a boarding environment, having discovered upon his arrival that boys only sporadically attended choir practice and failed to cohere as a unit. He insisted also that the student body consist exclusively of choristers, so as to optimize the boys' musical education and singing discipline. A century later, exactly one other school in the Anglican world adheres to our model: Westminster Abbey. Thus the sole organizations within our tradition to function as a church, plus boarding school for choristers only, are the Abbey and ourselves. That's a club with high standards.

But Saint Thomas Choir School does not simply train choristers; it transforms lives. Noble recognized the effect that camaraderie and caring adult leadership had on boys, especially those who, like himself, came from a modest background. Only in a boarding atmosphere could this effect be manifest. We're blessed to house our boys in an extraordinary building, which, besides being custom-designed, serves as our best recruitment tool: often a family, still unsure about sending their son to us, is completely won over after visiting West 58th Street, amazed at our one-of-a-kind space.

In sum, we're stewards of a magnificent heritage: Anglican choral music that enhances the liturgy, performed by boys who live in a nurturing, Christian environment, and who enjoy a full academic and athletic curriculum taught by expert faculty. One hundred years ago, during uncertain times following World War One, our founders demonstrated remarkable courage in launching Saint Thomas Choir School. As we enter our second century, may we, as did they, keep calm and carry on, sustaining their blessed vision.

—Charles F. Wallace, Headmaster

CENTENARY CLASS

Congratulations to the Class of 2019! We wish you the best at your new schools.

Darin Choi — The Kew-Forest School, New York
Sammy Jin — Gilman School, Maryland
Elyot Segger — Saint Andrew's School, Delaware
Isaac Shin — Saint James School, Maryland
Saturday, June 8, 2019 marked the Choir School’s 100th Commencement ceremonies. Along with the traditional prize giving, which recognizes boys’ achievements in music, academics, and citizenship, we bid farewell to faculty leaving us (see page 6) and to the four graduates. Father Wallace presented two new choristerships (see page 4) and then introduced the Centennial speaker:

FITTINGLY FOR OUR CENTENNIAL YEAR, today’s guest speaker is an alumnus of the Choir School. Despite his youthful appearance, we might suspect Aaron Primero graduated with the school’s first class, for his resume teems with accomplishments that most people would need 100 years to achieve. Hardly had Aaron earned his diploma from Groton than he went on to obtain a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics from Columbia University; followed by a 1-year Fulbright Fellowship in the Philippines to research international trade; followed by a graduate degree in Financial Economics at Saint Catherine’s College, Oxford; while he currently holds the position of Associate at Goldman Sachs. Yet Aaron somehow finds time to continue singing with three church choirs. To fill his empty schedule, he’s now preparing for the LSATs. Aaron came to the Choir School as a fourth grader from Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania, barely in time to attend school with his brother Josh, then an eighth grader. Aaron’s first big test was sharing a room with Mr. Jarrett. The fact that he survived such an ordeal speaks volumes about his resilience. More seriously, the fact that Aaron remained with us, having arrived just days before 9/11, speaks volumes about his family.

Aaron soon made his mark as an intensely studious boy, seemingly devoid of emotion. He was gently ribbed for this, as he was ribbed for being too-good-to-be-true, the archetypal Saint Thomas boy who excelled at everything: music, sports, academics.

Still, this Renaissance Man found ways to relax. He converted his dorm room into a space which served, in all but name, as the fifth floor lounge. And he did not lack taste for decoration. When I became Headmaster, one of my first tasks was to deal with the large collection of items left by my predecessor, a collection strong in imitation Tiffany lamps, kitchen appliances and classical CDs. After doling out gifts to staff and parents, a vast supply remained to off-load. Thus, Aaron’s pad became a garden of colored glass, and ultimately included the prize Aaron wanted above all: a George Foreman grill. Numberless were the burgers Aaron cooked for classmates.

Though beloved for his burgers, Aaron was feared as a soccer player; his mild manner belied the aggressiveness of his tackles. He won admiration too for his chess playing, and for establishing the school-wide chess tournament named after him. To commemorate that occasion, T-shirts were made in Aaron’s honor, an old box of which was recently discovered in a clothing closet. As the T-shirt states, Aaron was our senior prefect, in fact the first boy to receive that honor. Small wonder that, thirteen years later, Aaron became President of our Alumni Association. His election marks an important generational shift, and we look forward to working with him in a new era of leadership — and fashion!

CENTENNIAL ADDRESS BY AARON PRIMERO ’05

I WANT TO START by offering you a bit of history, since it is our school’s centennial year. A long time ago, when humankind was a little more primitive than today, thicker of skull and baggier of pants, your average chorister looked a lot like Mr. Jarrett and me, though more like Mr. Jarrett. During that Age, the law of the land was dispensed through green cards and red cards.

The idea was simple. For a good action or work done by a choirboy — say, scoring an A on a test — a faculty member could write the choirboy a green card. Similarly, for a misdemeanor, a faculty member could write the offending boy a red card. Choirboys would collect their stacks of greens and reds and, at the end of the week, show up to the Headmaster’s office with each. For every green you turned in, you received three alphabet gummy candies. For red cards, though, you received a scolding whose severity ranged, unpredictably, from mild warning to apocalypse.

I was not much of a troublemaker, which is probably why I was invited to speak today. In fact, I received one red card in four years — during my sixth grade when I took the elevator without an adult. I know, I know. To commit a crime so foul no choirboy would even think of it when trying to get from the gym to the seventh floor — what demons of mischief could have possessed me?

Actually, one might suggest the two eighth graders who encouraged me — known throughout midtown Manhattan for their troublemaking. I chose to board the elevator with them and stood equally blameworthy with them when caught. As I trembled outside the Headmaster’s office awaiting certain doom, my co-conspirators suggested I grab a long drink from the water fountain. So, to the water fountain I went, where I sipped both water and tears. When I returned, they emerged from the Headmaster’s office, red card already turned in, and told me to head up to study hall. They did not explain, and we never spoke of it again.

So, why am I telling this bit of Choir School history? In part, to talk about education: its workings, failures, and purpose. But also, to remind myself of important distinctions that I often forget, which you might find useful.

Your schooling has and will continue to proceed from the simple to the complex. Mr. Appleton teaches you arithmetic before geometry, because it’s hard to break down, say, the angles
of triangles before knowing how to add. For a similar reason, we stick to green cards and candy before a deep dive into contracts and moral philosophy.

You also might find that the more complexity you confront, the more you will rely on simple ideas and assumptions. The world is an awfully complex place, and our minds are just not big enough to understand it fully. So we bring order to it through patterns we recognize that, in turn, form our assumptions. We digest the world through bite-sized pieces we can stomach. The trouble is, we often fail to remind ourselves of these inferences. So we start treating them as if they were unspoken truths, the way we might, by force of habit, dismiss people wearing white socks under their dress shoes as lesser mortals.

Of course, these inferences can help us make sense of things and avoid excessive brain damage. But they will sometimes fail us — for no system or scheme we create can capture the full complexity of the world. No amount of red or green cards, for instance, would have helped me predict those two troublemaking eighth graders would assume the blame entirely for our forbidden elevator ride.

An overreliance on our assumptions and systems will condition us to seek the simplest, most satisfying explanation or solution even when there isn’t one. Many evils can emerge from over-simplifying issues that are inherently complex. The key here is discernment; that is, making proper sense of the world. This is one of two pillars of education I want to reflect on today, and the more slippery one. Core to discernment is being aware and humble: aware about the limits on our understanding, and humble about its frailties, which sway even what we deem to be undeniable truths. Doing so, we learn to avoid the mirages and mythologies. We learn to recognize that even though some idea or statement rings simpler, more measurable, or more satisfying, it does not necessarily reveal more value or truth or beauty. For those of you graduating today, as you enter an arena of increasing access and information and freedom and hormones, it will be crucial to distinguish between good ideas and ideas that simply sound compelling.

But more than mere caution, I hope to impart excitement. For with discernment, our reckoning with our assumptions allows us to become more welcoming of growth, more sensitive to beauty, more grateful for surprises.

Now, I mentioned two pillars of education. Discernment was first — and the second? Well, that’s daring, where we make choices and act upon our discernment. And that’s pretty simple. Just watch any Marvel movie. The one nuanced I’ll mention is this: daring does not always require new or bold or loud activity. In fact, sometimes it requires the opposite.

This rang true for President Lincoln, who was as daring as they come. We can see this especially in his eulogy for President Taylor whose quality of character, according to Lincoln, lay in his ability to hold his ground: General Taylor’s battles were not distinguished for brilliant military maneuver; but in all, he seems rather to have conquered by the exercise of a sober and steady judgment, coupled with a dogged incapacity to understand that defeat was possible. His rarest military trait was a combination of negatives — absence of excitement and absence of fear. He could not be flurried, and he could not be scared.

So, too, in quiet, steady ways, can we show readiness of heart, as two troublemakers did when they asked a third to drink from the fountain.

NEW CHORISTERSHIPS

In addition to the four choristerships already endowed, this June Father Wallace presented two new choristerships. The first was the Richard Heschke Choristership, made possible by Dr. Richard Heschke, who left his entire estate to the Choir School. Professor Emeritus of organ and church music at Concordia College, as well as a noted organ recitalist, Dr. Heschke left a lasting legacy with a generation of teachers, church musicians, and performers to whom he imparted his love of liturgy and music. Dr. Heschke was a loyal pledge to Saint Thomas Church and Choir School from 1993 until his death in 2016.

Introducing the second new choristership, Father Wallace said: “We can be all proud that the Choir School has transformed young lives. To do so, however, the parish itself had to be transformed. In 1901, Saint Thomas, facing an identity crisis of sorts, appointed a young Rector from Virginia, Ernest Milmore Stires, to define the parish’s place amongst the panoply of Episcopal churches in New York. Over a decade would pass before another illustrious figure entered our history — not on a white horse but on an ocean steamer. T. Tertius Noble arrived in 1913 and with Stires established the primacy of music in our worship. Noble found a boy choir already in existence but lacking structure: though the boys lived locally, their attendance was sporadic. The church yearned for a level of musical excellence which would equal the grandeur of its new building on Fifth Avenue. In 1919, Noble answered their need by founding Saint Thomas Choir School. Fittingly, in this centennial year, we honour him by awarding the first T. Tertius Noble Choristership.” (See page 14 for more about the Noble Choristership.)

OUR MISSION

The Saint Thomas Choir School houses, nurtures, and educates the boy choristers of Saint Thomas Church Fifth Avenue. We work together to cultivate a love of learning through challenging academic study and professional musical training rooted in the Anglican choral tradition. Our unique, familial environment fosters self-reliance and personal growth, preparing students to contribute productively to their communities.
EIGHTH GRADE TRIP

As many of us in the Saint Thomas community have observed, the four students in the class of 2019 enjoy an uncommon level of rapport; during their time at the Choir School, they banded together in a way that is remarkable and invaluable. Naturally, then, their graduation trip was characterized by amicability, mischievous banter, and friendship.

We began by visiting Paris, which was a new city for all of the boys. Upon our arrival, we started to explore straightaway, and, despite increasingly frequent protests (accompanied by data and graphs on the Apple health app) that we had walked far enough for one day, we enjoyed sightseeing near the Louvre and Arc de Triomphe. After a brief rest, we ate an Italian dinner – this is an important detail to include since Darin cites the olive oil at this restaurant as one of his most memorable moments of the trip.

We remained in Paris for four more days, enjoying many sights and meals. Isaac stresses that baguettes are crucial to mention here. A highlight from this time was our visit to the Eiffel Tower, made even more exciting by the FOXSports live broadcast happening on the plaza for the Women’s World Cup. All of the boys, Sammy in particular, enjoyed keeping tabs on the tournament throughout our trip. In addition, we spent one day in Versailles, touring the gardens and state apartments. We all agreed that this short trip – especially the Hall of Mirrors – was one of our favorite days, and Elyot identifies our tour of the palace as his favorite element of the trip. Surprisingly, this group chose to shop at every possible opportunity; they collected numerous souvenirs along the way and returned home with suitcases which were much heavier than on the return trip than at the outset.

In London, we enjoyed many tourist activities such as a ride on the London Eye and a lunch and shopping trip with former Gap student Kevin John. In addition, however, we also participated in several events complementary to the boys’ education at Saint Thomas: we visited the Westminster Abbey Choir School and received a very special tour of Westminster Abbey led by Mr. Voice, their mathematics teacher. We also enjoyed the hospitality of David Conner, Dean of Windsor, and the opportunity to visit the state apartments and Deanery at Windsor Castle.

For our final day in Europe, we were very happy to visit Mr. Hyde in Cambridge. He graciously hosted us for a tour of King’s College – including a climb up to the roof. Elyot even tested the organ! We enjoyed the chance to see Mr. Hyde’s new home, and the visit was a wonderful conclusion to our travels.

When asked about his favorite memory, each student cited a different portion of the trip; certainly, the variety of answers offered by the boys is a testament to the number of unique and memorable experiences we had. Although our trip concluded the boys’ time at the Choir School, the hospitality and kindness we received showed these students that their ties to Saint Thomas will extend far beyond graduation. We are deeply thankful for the generosity of those who provide annually for this trip, and I am certain that the class of 2019 will treasure these memories for many years to come.

–Elizabeth Ratze, Latin and English

Answer to p1: Bottom center foreground, just right of 7th Avenue and the tall white building, our circular chapel window is visible.
DEPARTURES

Daniel Hyde
At Graduation, we were especially pleased to welcome Daniel Hyde back from his new home at King's College, Cambridge. Father Wallace spoke about the impression Mr. Hyde made on the Choir School community in less than three years:

CERTAINLY, HE ARRIVED AT THE RIGHT TIME; or to turn that notion around, the skills we then needed most were exactly those he brought. In the aftermath of John Scott's death, Dan's combination of personal and professional strengths were nothing short of heaven sent.

Dan didn't simply bring us added height. He displayed a gift for finding intellectually curious boys who might not have had previous choir experience, and molding them into successful choristers. He maintained lofty musical standards within a caring, nurturing context. He took time to consider what life was like, outside of church, for his choirboys. And just as their boyishness was graced with a bit of sophistication, so was Dan's sophistication graced with a bit of boyishness: he appeared ever cheery, good humored and mischievous. For all these reasons, the boys found it hard to say goodbye.

Three years ago, when I took the eighth grade boys to England on their graduation trip, Dan was leaving Oxford to cross the pond for his new post at Saint Thomas Church. Dan invited us to his farewell party in the college garden. There, we witnessed his impact on the community at Magdalen College. Now matters have come full circle: we've witnessed his impact on the community here, as he's departed for King's College. There he succeeds Stephen Cleobury, who served for 37 years. Given that the King's choristers visit us with some regularity, we look forward to welcoming Dan back - where he'll not only direct his new boys, but can check in on his "old ones," whose lives are all the better for knowing him and for working under his dedicated leadership.

Richard Jarrett
Having known Mr. Jarrett in more than one capacity over the years, Father Wallace bid him farewell at Graduation - for the second time:

WE THOUGHT WE'D GOTTEN RID OF Richard Jarrett when he graduated in 2005. Little did we know, on that Prize Day of yore, that he'd come back to us in 2014 - not to turn in late homework, of which there remained a considerable amount, but to serve as Athletic Director.

Richard first arrived at the school as a fourth grader. He quickly won friends, especially among older kids, which is unusual. Richard believed they gravitated to his boyish, competitive spirit; today it can be revealed - they liked him because he had an older sister. In truth, it was difficult not to like Richard. For one thing, he oozed "cool," always wearing the coolest sunglasses, the coolest baseball caps, and the coolest clothes. For another, he kept a stash of high-grade contraband in his closet, finally seized by housemothers who traced the trail of candy wrappers.

Indeed, Richard seemed preordained to be our gym teacher. Gradually we became aware of the hours he and a few of his classmates spent in the gym post lights-out, when they were supposed to be in bed. After graduating, but prior to becoming faculty, Richard helped out as camp lifeguard. Once on staff, he expanded his skill set through assisting in the fourth grade classroom and supervising dorms.

Richard also numbers among the few boys who, having gone on to high school, were invited back to sing by John Scott. Our beloved but exacting late choirmaster had few favorites, yet Richard was one. He even earned a solo on Mr. Scott's first Christmas CD. Now you know why Richard shamelessly promotes it!

In sum, this young man has deep roots at Saint Thomas. Those roots, strengthened by the support of his family, will forever keep him close to us, even as he moves on to pastures new.

Lorraine Enlow
We first came to know Lorraine Enlow through her excellent work at Holyrood and Santa Cruz Church in Washington Heights. There she founded and directed a highly successful afterschool program offering music, fellowship and academic support to neighborhood children. Thanks to Lorraine's devotion, several boys in the program went on to audition for us.

Sparky, creative and unfailingly positive, Lorraine revamped our admissions process, helped rebuild the website, and supervised a massive overhaul of the database. She joined us at a challenging time, on the heels of John Scott's death and the Great Flood - not exactly ideal circumstances in which to promote the school. Yet promote she did. Most remarkably, she thrived in her position while holding down a full-time job at Saint James' Madison Avenue. While we're sorry to lose Lorraine, we're grateful for the time she gave us during this important transition in the life of the Choir School.

Ouarda Bonsignore
Madame Bonsignore has capably and cheerfully taught French at the Choir School for a decade. This summer, she made the decision to move on to a new chapter in her professional life. Ouarda's passion for her subject and the order with which she ran her classroom have been the stuff of Saint Thomas legend since her arrival. Special highlights of Madame Bonsignore's time at the Choir School included the French Cafe performances, in which she worked with the boys on staging creative musical scenes entirely directed and performed in French! She will be missed, but we wish her bonne chance in everything she does. Au revoir, Madame!
ARRIVALS

Victoria Vanasco, Director of Admissions
Ms. Vanasco has a varied background, all of which she brings to bear on her work with the Choir School. As a teenager, she was involved in her high school's choir and theater, and in college she continued with music and performance. She earned a Master's degree at NYU in English literature, and afterwards worked in the NYC film business on the production side, in art departments, rigging crews, and the like. Ms. Vanasco is also an attorney, having practiced in NYC for several years. She first became involved with choirs when her son (now in grade 7 at the Choir School) began singing in their local choir, Saint Paul's in Buffalo. Ms. Vanasco teamed up with that choir, developing and promoting fundraising, and integrating community development. Crucially, she helped expand the size of the choir from eight choristers to twenty-two over a short period of time. “I wanted to let everyone know about the world of choral music – that it exists! I was on fire with the feeling of Where has it been all my life?”

Ms. Vanasco came on board at the Choir School in May, working alongside Mrs. Enlow to ensure a smooth transition. Now that the admission position is full-time (thanks to a generous grant from Dr. Tuohy), Ms. Vanasco is working hard not only on recruitment and admissions, but also on moving the school's recruitment systems into the digital age, taking advantage of web-based marketing, developing the 2020-21 tour season to travel further afield, and updating the school's promotional materials (see page 9 for more admissions news). Because so much of the work can be done remotely, Ms. Vanasco is based in Buffalo and visits the school every other week. She has three cats and loves to garden. Welcome!

Calvin Wentling '10, Music Theory and Athletics
Calvin Wentling joins a growing cadre of Choir School alumni who have returned to the school to teach. After graduating from Princeton in 2018 with a degree in music, Mr. Wentling auditioned for Mr. Hyde and joined the choir's sub list as an alto. Last year, he began helping out at the school, tutoring individual students and then stepping in to help Mr. Hyde and Mr. Sheen with Music Theory classes. This September, he joined the faculty full-time as Music Theory teacher and Athletic Director.

Mr. Wentling chatted with us about the experience of teaching music theory to young boys. “When you start off in the choir, you're doing things that you don't understand, just by mimicking. Eventually you form an association between the sound and what you see on the page.” He can remember that awakening himself – he remembers everything about being a choirboy, a reservoir of experience he uses to help his students focus and navigate. He teaches all the grades in both sports and music theory, giving him a rich relationship with the boys that spans arts, academics, and athletics. He also spoke about his intangible alumni bonus: “Sometimes a boy will see me in the back cover of his music and ask – What did you do here? They sense that I know what they're going through.”

When digging for "fun facts" about Mr. Wentling, we learned a lot, especially considering that we've known him since he was a squirt in a short cassock. A favorite piece of the repertoire? “I love Ubi Caritas. It's a really special piece; beyond its pure aesthetic, it's part of a rite of passage at graduation, when the graduates receive their crosses and final blessings.” Last good book he read? “The Complete Stories of Vladimir Nabokov. It seems he has access to words that mere mortals do not.” His thesis at Princeton? A composition for SATB, performed with twelve singers, an Agnus Dei interspersed with Lux Aeterna, Bible verses about light and sight, and recordings of Alan Watts reading his work. “Watts was an Episcopalian priest turned beatnik philosopher, and his voice is really rich. Overall, my composition is obsessed with the idea of light. I love when Jesus says Receive your sight. Your faith has healed you.” Safe to say that anyone who wants to know Mr. Wentling better will find it worth their while.

Nicholas Quardokus, Assistant Organist
Mr. Quardokus landed at the Choir School in August from his home in Bridgman, MI. He tells us he grew up in rural western Michigan and attended a Lutheran parochial school through grade eight. "They had chapel and sang, so from a young age, I knew I loved music. My third grade teacher was the organist/choirmaster, and in eighth grade he offered to give me free organ lessons. I'd been playing the piano already, but that was the start of the organ for me." Mr. Quardokus says that he sang in children's choirs, but nothing as intense as what the Choir School boys are doing. "One of the incredible things about being here," he told us, "is experiencing all this through their eyes and seeing how fortunate they are to be at this place and experience everything that I wish I could have had at their age.

After public high school, where he played brass instruments in the band and sang in the school chorus, Mr. Quardokus did his undergraduate degree in organ performance at Indiana University. He explained that Indiana has a strong church music curriculum, with many service playing courses and every week a sacred music practicum. "I remember going to the first practicum – this was having grown up Lutheran – and they handed everyone a psalm with Anglican chant on it, and I was looking at it wondering, What on earth is this and how do you read it?" An important mentor at Indiana was Bruce Neswick, onetime musician at the Cathedral of St John the Divine and student of Gerre Hancock. Suffice to say, Mr. Quardokus's love of Anglican music was quickly established.

He did his Master's Degree at Yale, taking advantage of the opportunity to work as organist at both Trinity on the Green and Yale Divinity School. After Yale, he spent a year as Organ Scholar at Saint Paul's K Street in Washington, DC. This is where his life began to
intersect with ours: "I can remember the first evensong that I played at Saint Paul’s: it happened that Jeremy Filsell was singing in the choir that night. I thought, Oh my gosh, I should have practiced more!"

Mr. Guardokus told us he is thrilled to be at Saint Thomas, and working with Dr. Filsell. As for his life off the organ bench, we are pleased to report that he is a University of Michigan football fan. He tells us he caught up this summer on reading some classics he hadn’t read before (he particularly likes F. Scott Fitzgerald), but since arriving in New York, most of his time goes to practicing. "There are very few places that go through the repertoire that Saint Thomas does, so it’s a great challenge, and a great pleasure."

Veronique Buelens, French

Madame Buelens moved to New York from Brussels, Belgium nine years ago with her husband and two daughters. Before joining the Choir School faculty, she taught French both privately and through programs at the French Lyceum and at Alliance Française, among other places. She tells us she taught "la petite école" at Alliance, working with children between the ages of 2 and 5, an exciting group but "not so good for my back." Luckily, she will not be called upon to lift or carry her students at the Choir School – we hope! Speaking to us after term had begun, Madame Buelens said that she loved how "the atmosphere of the school is so warm. I don’t know if it’s the wood on the walls, the music, the main staircase, or what, but the school is a very cozy, really nice place." She tells us that she used to frequent the Pain Quotidien on the corner of 58th Street, not realizing that there was a school across the street, let alone the Choir School. Kismet?

When we asked Madame Buelens what she does when not teaching French, she revealed that she is passionate about horses. Her horse, Grisley, was also born in Belgium and was left to her by a friend who had died. When the Buelens moved to the United States, Grisley came with them. He is stabled in New Jersey, and Madame Buelens rides him several times per week. We believe the boys are already learning equestrian vocabulary.

SUMMER STAFF ADVENTURES

This fall, we had the pleasure of coming to the school for lunch midweek, and we took the opportunity to check in with the faculty about their summer activities. It was no surprise – or shouldn’t be – that these talented folk spent their summer vacations not only recharging after a busy year, but also developing themselves and others. Mrs. Wentling (Housemother) travelled to India on a mission trip (see page 9). Mr. Spoletini (Voice) co-directed Manhattan School of Music’s summer program with Ms. Tennill, his predecessor at the Choir School. It was the summer of rags to riches as they took turns directing a wide range of students in Annie and Cinderella. Afterwards, Mr. Spoletini travelled with his family to France and then returned to prepare for his many fall responsibilities, including getting his son ready for first grade.

Father Wallace also spent time in France, first as part of the eighth grade trip to Paris and London (see page 5) and then as Chaplain to four small Anglican parishes in the south of France and Italian Riviera. After dashing back to New York for the Girl Chorister Course in July (see page 11), he was finally able to kick back for two weeks in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Cuomo (History) kept his nose to the grindstone, teaching four courses to high schoolers at Choate: a survey of micro and macro economics; finance and investing; ethics; and a history of the CIA. We mustn’t fear that he’s all work and no play, however, since he managed to make it to Yosemite National Park and hike Half Dome. [US National Parks = best vacation deal in the country. – Ed.]

Dr. Gilbert (Science) stayed closer to home and took advantage of the beauty of New York State, spending time with family and friends nearby and in the Finger Lakes.

Mr. Berry (Third and Fourth Grade) told us that he spent time with family in Rhode Island. Besides earning a golf handicap, he worked on his curriculum and hit the beach. His favorite beach read this summer: Meddling Kids, by Edgar Cantero, which he described as adult fiction paying homage to books such as It and The Hardy Boys.

Mr. Appleton (Math) reported that he spent the summer teaching mathematics at Rye Country Day School. Snore, you might say, but fear not, Reader; we at the Choir School News always press for the deeper story, and this is how we learned that Mr. Appleton had also spent a good deal of time “studying interactive storytelling.” What is Interactive Storytelling when it’s at home? Why, Dungeons and Dragons and the like. Yes, Mr. Appleton immersed himself in the worlds and strategies of multiple table-top roleplaying games! He even learned to be a gamemaster. Rumor has it the faculty is holding a regular game night this term and that a few mathematics lessons may have begun examining the implications of the multi-sided die.

Ms. Francisco (English) took several professional development courses this summer, but she also travelled with her father to Portugal, where they took a Portuguese language course in preparation for their citizenship test. (Don’t worry – she isn’t leaving us for Portugal!) They’re eligible to claim Portuguese citizenship because her paternal grandfather was born in Portugal. Boa Sorte!

We also got to meet the newest Gap student, Jude. As we went to take his picture, the boys mobbed around him, so it’s probably safe to say he’s settling in well.

Finally, we wish belated congratulations to Mr. Eppley (Art) and his family on the birth of Theo Frederick Eppley in July.
INDIA MISSION

This summer Housemother Karen Wentling travelled to India as part of a six-person mission team. Mrs. Wentling writes:

THE FOCUS OF OUR TRIP was to support the work of Women of Worth, an Indian organization that advocates for women, empowering them to become self-sufficient in all areas of life. WoW rescues young women out of illegal marriages and trafficking, as well as raising public awareness of these horrific abuses. We assisted with a fundraising event, and we participated in Sunday worship at Powerhouse Church, not only with offerings of music, but also with testimony from three of our group. We held a half day retreat for girls from two local group homes in Chennai. One group was from a small Catholic-run organization, a hostel where high school and college age women are learning trade skills. These women have been rescued from either trafficking or child marriages. The other group were junior high age girls with similar histories who live in a juvenile home run by the government. On a follow-up visit to the girls at the Catholic home, I was able to present a new sewing project to their female tailors, who are working to earn income and provide useful products to their communities.

In Kolkata, we visited the red-light district and met with children of sex traffickers. We did a brief presentation offering encouragement to continue in their studies, and to remind them that they are each a precious child of a loving God. Later, we had the privilege of visiting the home of Mother Teresa, and in our final outing, we visited a village school, where we met with nearly 250 teenage girls. We were packed into a hot tiny room and greeted as though we were movie stars — strange to us, but they were excited to see us white people with blond hair! I was so glad to talk with these girls about their worth as individuals and to educate them about their bodies and their health.

I will be praying for the many people who are working to bring justice to India, and I will be praying for a changed culture which recognizes the God-given value of each individual. On a practical level, I will be following up on the sewing projects to offer support as needed for the female tailors. I will also be collecting used computers and smartphones for media training in Kolkata. I’m grateful for the support of the Choir School in this mission, and I bear witness that even in the seeming darkness, the light of Christ cannot be snuffed out.

ADMISSIONS NEWS

Since Victoria Vanasco took the helm in the admissions office, there has been a whirlwind of activity. In addition to conducting admissions interviews and visits all fall, Ms. Vanasco is reaching out to educational consultants in the metropolitan area, seeking students who are musically gifted but who may not be a good fit for their current schools. “The Choir School is an amazing intellectual and artistic milieu for kids like that,” she explains, “kids who are usually bored in school and so may not be performing as well as they could. We want to reach more boys with high potential who have been ignored. We’re looking for ‘sparky’ boys. You know them when you see them.”

This October, we began shooting a new recruitment video, and Ms. Vanasco hopes to have it finished early this winter. Coming up this December, in addition to the usual appearances and concerts, the boys will be singing at the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular. We hear that all the faculty have volunteered to chaperone that event.
UPDATE ON MRS. STEELE

Everyone is enjoying having the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Steele back in their proper places in the dining hall, brighter than ever and displaying details no one could discern before. We were pleased to receive an email from the Rev. Lawrence Crumb in Eugene, Oregon about the Steeles:

In your latest Choir School News, you state that the name of Mrs. Steele is unknown. According to several public member trees in Ancestry.com, her name was Ann Nannie Gordon French (1866-1932). The Steeles had three children: Eleanor, Nancy, and Kathryn.

Thank you, Father Crumb!

BACK TO CAMP

Returning to Camp Incarnation with the Choir School, after eight years away, was quite a trip down memory lane. I was shocked at just how little the place seemed to have changed: the charms of Katsanis Hall were unabated, the lake water just as invigorating, and the culinary offerings as exquisite as ever...

Of course, a lot has changed both for me and the school, but the forceful contrast of Camp against Choir School is no less strong. To my mind, Camp is synonymous with freedom. It means leaving the overbearing density of midtown Manhattan to wander down wooded paths, throw each other off the water trampoline, toast marshmallows, and tell ghost stories around campfires under starlit skies.

Apart from choir rehearsal, the whole day's agenda is about having fun outside. With nothing pressing to do, even the adults can relax and enjoy the outdoors (some more than others - not everyone has Dr. Gilbert's rustic enthusiasm). As a faculty member now, I'm once again looking forward to spending some quality time with the Saint Thomas community in the beautiful Connecticut woods.

- Calvin Wentling '10, Music Theory and Athletics

BACK TO SCHOOL

This September, the boys returned to new classmates, new teachers, and newly renovated dormitories. The school continues to add decorative elements from works created by the boys in art class, and this summer the elevator got an upgrade with a mural created by the boys' exercise in layering paint, which is not too different from layering pizza ingredients. Also in the elevator: publication of Frankie's poem!

Five new boys joined the school this September, representing grades three, four, five, and six. All of them quickly learned their way around and got fitted for cassocks.
Since Easter, new winds have begun to blow through the boys' musical lives. During Dr. Filsell's first days at Saint Thomas, the choir took part in the annual Choirmasters' Conference, directed this year by the legendary Stephen Darlington, recently retired from Christ Church, Oxford. We're told that the turnout was good, the choirmasters enthusiastic, and that the boys really enjoyed Mr. Darlington.

This fall, Dr. Filsell got his feet properly under the table and began to work on the repertoire, beginning with a new psalter. Not only is the choir using new settings for the psalms, but it is now singing all of the appointed psalms each Evensong. Dr. Filsell explained that "the poetry, dynamism, and drama of the psalms is the heart of the liturgy," hence the expansion of psalm singing on weekdays. To prevent evensong going too long — and so the boys can get back in time for dinner and study hall — the introits and hymns have been removed except on Festal Evensongs.

The choir has also been busy learning new service music (well, music new to them). Nico Muhly's *Bright Mass With Canons* made an appearance in October, not having been sung in several years. Parishioners and webcast listeners may also begin to notice more of Gerre Hancock's compositions in the services this fall. This is because the choir is planning to record an album of Dr. Hancock's music this February. It has been seven years since the choir did a formal recording, so the experience will be new to all of the boys.

**BENJAMIN SHEEN RETURNS TO OXFORD**

We are so pleased for Benjamin Sheen on his appointment as sub-organist at Christ Church, Oxford. Mr. Sheen has been an integral part of the Choir School since his arrival seven years ago, not least when he stepped in as Co-Choirmaster in the wake of John Scott's death. His appointment at Christ Church is professionally prestigious, and while it will offer new musical challenges, it is also a kind of homecoming for Mr. Sheen since he was Organ Scholar at Christ Church as an undergraduate. His last service with us will be Christmas Day, after which he will jet back across the Atlantic, arriving just in time for Boxing Day celebrations. Before he leaves us, however, he will be recording a solo album on the Dobson organ, called *In London Town*. Given Mr. Sheen's extraordinary talents and his busy concert schedule, we are confident that we will see him again soon. In the meantime, we wish him the very best in his new post!

**GIRL CHORISTER COURSE**

Thirty-six girls hailing from eleven states attended the nine-day Girl Chorister Course, held in July at the Choir School. Our Music Director this year was Katherine Dienes-Williams, who joined us for the third time from her post as Organist and Master of the Choristers at Guildford Cathedral in the UK. Her leadership extended far beyond the music as she lent her energizing presence to our excursions, meal-times, team-building and other aspects of the course.

The course's activities revolved around preparation for two treble Evensongs and the final Sunday Eucharist in which the girls were joined by the Gentlemen of the Choir. Beyond learning to beautifully execute the challenging music, the girls, who ranged in age from eleven to seventeen, attended classes in music theory and music history, enjoyed delightful feasts and confections from Chef Heidi's kitchen, participated in private voice lessons, and explored the city. Excursions included a ride on the Roosevelt Tram, visiting the Public Library, a scavenger hunt in Central Park, strolling along the Highline, attending *Beetlejuice, The Musical*, visiting the Natural History Museum, and, of course, shopping!

For many girls, the Girl Chorister Course is the highlight of their summer; for some, the highlight of their entire year. They return to their home choirs inspired by the joy of working together to create glorious music, bursting with new skills and confidence, and charged with a deeper commitment to excellent choral singing. Their roles as choristers continue to develop, and returning to the course year after year gives them a renewed sense of the effort it takes to make good music, but also the reward that comes with hard work.

In addition to Mrs. Dienes-Williams's role as Music Director, the course thrived this year under the capable management of new Course Director Virginia Bolena PA '20 from VA, with the support of returning Assistant Director Emma Barnaby from VT, Nurse Jennifer Johnson PA '09 from CT, Vocal Coach Christine Papania from Brooklyn, Music Theory teacher Dr. Rick Nelson from OH, and Housemother Kristin Reichert from VA. Benjamin Sheen served as Course Organist, Patrick Fennig as Music Librarian, and Wanda Matos as Registrar.

We are pleased to announce that Jared Johnson will serve as Music Director for next summer's Girl Chorister Course, scheduled for July 18-26, 2020.

—Virginia Bolena PA '20, Course Director

If you wish to support the Choir School or any of its designated funds — such as the Girl Chorister Fund, the Camp Fund, the Learning Assistance Fund — please visit our website (www.choirschool.org) and click the Giving tab.
ALUMNI NEWS

SENTIMENTAL CENTENNIAL recall by Wicks Stires ’70

Having such a strong family history with Saint Thomas Church, it was with some
tentativeness that I agreed to leave the comfortable confines of the Browning School and
audition for the Choir School. My father was then on the Vestry (later becoming Senior
Warden, and then Treasurer of the Episcopal Diocese of NY), and my great-grandfather
had founded the Choir School with T. Tertius Noble’s musical leadership and the financial
backing and encouragement of Charles Steele, J.P. Morgan’s personal lawyer. Applying
for fifth grade, the entry level at the time, I passed the vocal tests with William Self,
Choirmaster, and then sufficiently obfuscated Lois Ballenger’s psychological evaluation,
which included the infamous ink blot test. The rest was to become history...

I felt overwhelmed at first with the regimentation of our daily routine: morning hand
and bed inspections by the Eighth Grade Prefects (and being on silence for breakfast if
you failed), singing grace for every meal, having our tables dismissed by the Head Prefect
according to the rank of the faculty member heading each table. It was a lot to absorb, but
absorb it we did, and by October, we had all learned to make our beds with crisp hospital
corners, squeeze our washcloths out, study, attend daily choir rehearsals, learn chancery
cursive with Rand Castile, and march out to Central Park for sports.

By the way, in my day we had killer soccer, basketball and softball teams. No slouches allowed! Of course, being a choirboy created
a big chip on one’s shoulders which we all squarely aimed to correct. The buildings in the school on 55th Street were connected by
a skywalk, and I loved having softball catches in the courtyard below it with my buddies John Sutton ’70 and David Conroy ’70.
One building housed the faculty, boys, kitchen, and dining room while the other housed classrooms, a choir rehearsal stage, and the
gymnasium. Up back in the gymnasium was an old set of cast iron weights that we all tried to work out with. This was the domain
of Hugo St. John ’70 and John Sutton ’70 during my senior year; earlier giants of the gym were George Boyd ’66, Mark Peters ’67,
Craig Arnold ’67, Chris Nass ’68, and John Fox ’69. We had a Gym Committee, and being on it was “the bomb” as far as schoolboy
status went. Only Gym Committee members were allowed to open and close the gym, which required operating an industrial-looking
three-handle, James-Bond-like power switch. That was a big deal then.

Sundays were Saint Thomas Church days, with two services, and besides that, weekends occasionally included a school matinee
visit to the Metropolitan Opera. Francis Robinson, a vestryman, was the executive director at the opera, and we would occasionally be
required to attend yet another lengthy performance – without fidgeting. That’s a lot to ask of a nine-year-old, yet after a few years, the
vanilla ice cream and wafer during intermission was definitely something we looked forward to!

We sang at Carnegie Hall under the direction of Leopold Stokowski and at Lincoln Center with Leonard Bernstein. We recorded an
album of hymns with Leontyne Price, and we filmed a Kraft Christmas Special with Mitzi Gaynor and Ossie Davis Jr. Also part of the
cultural mix were Mr. Clem’s annual Gilbert and Sullivan musicals. In eighth grade, I even attended one of Led Zeppelin’s first concerts
at Carnegie Hall with a small group of students, all advisees of our upper school dorm master, Ernest Painter. Mr. Painter was not as
cool as Mr. Castile, but he was still “leading edge” with an orange rug and an AR Turntable with separate power amp. (Harman Kardon’s
stackable record players were on their way out.) We had free weekends every two or three weeks, and I spent them in NYC at my
parents’ apartment, inviting another student whose family didn’t live in the metropolitan area. Watching Batman and gorging on Pepsi
and Fritos were always on our agenda.

Dr. Morris, a very low-key, low church Episcopalian, was the Rector then, yet he was soon to be followed by Brit and high churchman
John Andrew, who, with the addition of the now legendary choirmaster Gerre Hancock, repositioned our 11am Sunday services as “The
Greatest Show on Earth.” Few of the choirboys of the 1960’s and early 1970’s would have made the cut for the choirs that Gerre Hancock
and later John Scott directed, and the bar has been permanently raised.

Saint Thomas Choir School provided some of the most memorable experiences of my life, and now it’s time to secure our second
century. Roger Black ’62 said that he recalls marching down Fifth Avenue to Bergdorf Goodman’s to sing Christmas carols to Grace
Kelly while she tried on dresses. That era of glamor and wealth may have passed, and certainly the mid-twentieth century “white shoe
parish is largely gone, but to preserve – and extend – the Choir School’s livelihood and heritage, we need to think big about the future.

Which brings me to my favorite story about my Grandfather Stires. After the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906, he sent $5,000 that
JP Morgan had donated towards the new church building – the beautiful gothic structure that we all know so well – to the victims of
the quake. When Morgan learned that his money had gone to San Francisco, he was perturbed but nevertheless wrote out another
$5,000 check to the church. Dr. Stires famously handed it back to him with the greatest fundraising rejoinder I have ever heard: “Thank
you Mr. Morgan, but I have much bigger plans for you!” My grandfather thought big, and under his leadership, not only was the church
rebuilt from the ashes of a fire, but the Choir School was founded. Let us today make this the case for our Choir School, that it is the
ultimate cultural experience worth preserving.

-Wicks Stires ’70
THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Not many people remember their middle school years with great fondness. It is often just part of the struggle to leave childhood and gain independence, with the possibility of experiencing a few moments of light that hint at who you might become. Few alumni associations for middle schools exist because people who work in advancement know how few people want to spend time remembering this awkward period. When asked whether middle school could be an amazing, often glamorous time of working alongside adults to create something incredibly beautiful to be heard by people around the world, I know only a few who would answer with a resounding Yes!

Those few – the Saint Thomas alumni – remember their time at the Choir School as a unique opportunity, a few golden years spent in a magical place. Here boys learn to think, do, work, solve problems for themselves. They earn respect through their daily hard work. They know true loyalty from their fierce commitment to their fellow choristers. They learn to become poised, articulate, and dignified young men.

Another aspect of the magic, perhaps, is that all alumni feel they have attended the school during its zenith. Just ask any alum: their choir was the most excellent, their choirmaster the best; they had the most fun with their classmates; their headmaster was epic, their teachers brilliant, their nurses and housemothers the model of kindness. Each and every alumni was there for the school's best years.

The Choir School may have been a little slow in bringing an alumni association from idea to reality, but it hardly seemed an urgent matter. The church and school had plenty else to fill the time of staff members. It wasn’t until 2005 that the Alumni Association finally formed, with the full support of Father Mead, Gerre Hancock, and Charles Wallace. A steering committee was convened of at least one alumnus from each decade, two parents of alumni, and a member of the faculty. John Neiswanger provided thoughtful guidance on establishing good organizational structure, and parishioner Kenneth Koen gave legal counsel in the writing of a charter and by-laws. The first several meetings were dedicated to honoring the past so that we could envision a future. Our hope was that alumni would have official acknowledgement of their enduring contributions to the Choir School in an organization that would welcome them home. We knew that Saint Thomas alumni yearned to be with each other, to walk in the Fifth Avenue church doors and, with a lump in their throat, touch the choir stalls and remember that time. They had been doing this on their own, but the Alumni Association gave them the chance to share their experiences with other choristers across the generations.

They and their families gave much to Saint Thomas, and they remain a part of Saint Thomas. As Father Mead said, our alumni are not an aggregation of former students, but a lasting part of the congregation. Let us hope that as very members incorporate, the alumni family will support and lift up the school so another century of young men will receive what every alumnus has received, and so that our congregation will survive and thrive.

—Ruth Cobb PA ’01 & ’03, Director of Alumni Relations 2005-2014

A TRIBUTE TO SUSAN HILL

At the alumni reunion in November, we will bid a fond farewell to Susan Hill, who steps down as Alumni Director. Susan has been such a generous and enthusiastic advocate for alumni, and we would never have been able to plan or execute the many wonderful Centenary events without her. Aaron Primero ’05, Chad Newsome ’81 PA ’13, and Tom Carroll ’88, current and former Alumni Association presidents, will pay tribute to her during the reunion.

AARON WRITES:

When I reflect on Susan Hill and her service to the Choir School, my mind bends back to a revelation of asparagus three summers ago. It was Memorial Day weekend and I had planned with a friend to see how the fish were biting in Massachusetts. Few found these plans exciting (I know not why), but Susan was one of them. “Any chance that you’re available for dinner and drinks after your fishing on Sunday?” she wrote. “We’d love to see you!”

The evening was pure Susan. Her Kentucky warmth drew us into her home, introducing us to her husband, Donald, son Vick, and another guest who was Vick’s former teacher at Brooks. My friend in tow happened to be my former teacher at Groton. Ice was broken. Wine poured. And the world, according to Susan’s design, was made small.

It was lovely company around the table, well-lit by candles and white wine, so I slightly scold myself for remembering most vividly the asparagus, steamed and simple. But it was the best I’d ever had, at the height of its short season, I learned, from a farm no short distance from their home. “They’re farther,” she conceded, “but better than all the others – and I didn’t want you to miss out!”

My mind keeps returning to the asparagus because it’s this sensitivity to what’s rare and opportune, and that resolution to share it despite the extra driving, that’s made Susan so valuable to our Alumni Association and to our celebration of the school’s Centenary. Without Susan, it’s unlikely we would have had Founders’ Day, or the Day of Giving, or the reception at Steinway Hall, or the Symposium. These were part of her vision to impart to former choristers, parents, and teachers a greater sense of belonging. As we complete our celebration of the centenary, I want to thank Susan for her contributions to the Choir School.
More personally, I am grateful to Susan as a colleague and friend, and will miss collaborating with her about alumni matters after she ends her duties as Alumni Director this December. She is welcoming of new ideas but maintains a reverence for the traditions and history that keep the Choir School unique. Knowing that details indeed matter, she makes sure they are polished to perfection. She is always attentive to people, no matter their age or background. And, as the mother of two former choirboys, Wick '97 and Rowland '98, she has shown me a brand of devoted and durable parenthood that I hope to emulate in more ways than one.

CHAD NEWSOME WRITES:
Back in June of 2009, Susan Hill and her husband, Donald, opened their home in Massachusetts for an alumni gathering. As my time as President of the Alumni Board had just ended, I missed this event. That was a mistake I wouldn't soon repeat. When Susan joined the board as a parent representative and then later as the Alumni Association Director, she brought a new level of energy to our group. Her consistent hard work, dedication to the Choir School, and wonderfully engaging demeanor made her a natural fit for the Alumni Association.

Personally, I am going to miss having Susan as part of the Alumni Association and, most importantly, want to wish her all the best in her new ventures. Her successor will have some mighty big shoes to fill. With a heart as big as the Big Apple, I know Susan and I will be staying in touch. She is one of those people that I can truly call a dear friend.

TOM CARROLL WRITES:
Susan Hill has been a gift to the Choir School and an amazing partner for the Alumni Association. Susan made my tenure as President of the Alumni Association easier than it should have been during a time of necessary and successful reconnection with alumni from the Gordon Clem years, while we also continued our engagement with boys from all eras. She should be especially lauded for implementing an incredible social media program to keep us all connected for many years to come. Susan will be missed in this role, but I am sure she will always be present in our minds when we reflect on our time as Saint Thomas choristers.

CENTENARY CELEBRATION
This has been an exciting year at the Choir School as we celebrate our Centennial. Founders’ Day (March 3) was a resounding success, with nearly 70 alums attending, ranging from the 1950s to our newest alumni from the class of 2018. The Rev’d David Cobb PA ’01 & ’03 preached at the 11am service, and then we had lunch at the Choir School. We took photos in the library of the entire group and also by decade. Over 40 alumni joined the choir for Evensong, after which four young alumni - high schoolers - performed at the Organ Recital.

We initiated our first Day of Giving in May and raised almost $34,000 in just a few days! The total was matched by Dr. James Touhy to complete the funding of the T. Tertius Noble Centennial Choristership. That day we also exceeded our goal of having over 100 donors contribute, helped by the entire Choir School family: alumni, parents, faculty and staff, parishioners and friends.

On a personal note, I can still remember participating in the 75th and 80th anniversaries when I was a choir mom, and how much fun I had meeting alumni and their families as well as sharing the bonds of being a member of the Choir School family. Photos and mementoes of the Choir School’s rich and storied life are featured in the display cases in the school’s front hall; please take a moment to look when you visit.

Change, as we all know, is a fact of life. It’s true that the Choir School experienced changes after it moved from the “Old Building” to its present location on 58th Street. There have also been many changes from our 75th Anniversary to now. (If I had to single out the most unexpected change in all my years of being involved with the Choir School, I’d have to go with the cellphone closet. Who saw that one coming?) And yet there are many aspects about the Choir School, our core principles, which have remained constant: the unequalled musical excellence; the dedicated faculty who go above and beyond for our boys; our supportive community of parents, parishioners, and alumni whose passion to see the Choir School and its boys succeed in being everything they can be - all of these things and more are why the Choir School stands today as the strongest it has ever been. Everybody reading this should feel proud for having contributed to its success!

-Susan Hill PA '97 & '98, Alumni Director
Julie Cornell, a friend of the late Clifford Frank '36, sent Father Wallace this lovely memorabilia from the 1929-30 year. Evidently, the boys attended the New York Philharmonic conducted by Ernest Schelling, and Clifford typed up (or was assigned to type up) what he learned about the instruments. Julie is a governor of the school at Saint Georges, Windsor, and Father Wallace taught her daughter years ago. Thank you, Julie, for sending this all the way from England!

We were sad to hear that Fred Jillson '49 passed away on May 4. His widow, Sheila, wrote us that "he was so proud of being a choirboy at Saint Thomas. Due to his illness, he was not able to be active recently. He was the class of 1949, and back then, if your voice changed, you were sent home. He loved Dr. Candlyn."

We were also saddened to hear that Chuck Soltis '52 (right) and a past president of the Alumni Board passed away in April.

Joshua Primero '01 and Ben Roberts '01 met up in Manila earlier this April while Ben was working in the Philippines.

This summer, Chef Heidi ran into Max Sandvoss '94 at the Dairyland Food Exhibit. Max was there representing Old Chatham Creamery in Groton, NY. She tells us that Old Chatham Creamery's yogurt and cheese are some of her favorites ever. "Blessed are the cheesemakers!"

We hear from the father of Andrew Jones '10 that "Andrew decided he didn't like writing software for a living and left about a month ago for a year in Taipei studying Chinese. Danny Deveau '10 visited him a week after Andrew got there. Andrew is quite happy and has somehow managed not to put on weight despite the best efforts of numerous relatives."

Dina Erickson, mother of Carl Erickson '17 (below right), write that "Carl and Filip Sentopal '18 had another eventful summer together. They spent a week at Long Beach Island, went to Ohio, and visited the Football Hall of Fame, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, the U.S.S. COD, and even did some camping. They may be at separate schools on different coasts but they are still best friends, and Saint Thomas brothers."

The Rev. Dr. Gregory Gresko '84 (Secretary to the Abbot Primate, Badia Primaziale S. Anselmo, Rome) attended the First Annual James Lloyd Breck Conference on Monasticism & the Church at Nashotah House in June. Greg tells us that the occasion was special for him personally since Nashotah House had once honored Gerre Hancock with an honorary doctorate in sacred music.
SAINT THOMAS CHOIR SCHOOL
DONATIONS

A NOTE ABOUT GIFTS TO THE CHOIR SCHOOL

All of us at Saint Thomas Choir School are deeply appreciative of the many contributions received throughout the year from generous and thoughtful alumni, parents, alumni parents, parishioners and friends. These gifts are critical to the school's ability to advance its mission. The list below includes everyone who has given to the school through a pledge to the 2019 Annual Appeal or gifts made to other funds in the period of July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019. There will be no donor lists in the next Winter/Spring Newsletter as the Summer/Fall 2020 Newsletter will list all gifts to the 2020 Annual Appeal and to other funds in the period of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

Great effort has been made to present accurate and complete listings of donors. However if you wish to report a discrepancy, please contact Kevin Hearne khearne@SaintThomasChurch.org or Ann Hall Kaplan akaplan@SaintThomasChurch.org.

Gifts to the 2019 Annual Appeal, directed to the Choir School

Annual pledges provide for the ongoing expenses of the school through the General Operating Fund.
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2019-2020

November 7 • 7:30pm
Saint Thomas Choir School at 100, featuring the music of Rachmaninov, Noble, and Patitus

November 8-10
Alumni Reunion Weekend

December 10 & 12 • 7:30pm
Handel's Messiah

December 18 • 12:10pm
Christmas Carol Service

December 19 • 5:30pm
Benjamin Britten's A Ceremony of Carols

December 21 • 4:00pm
Christmas Carol Service

December 22 • 4:00pm
Nine Lessons and Carols for Christmas

March 26, 2020 • 7:30pm
C.P.E. Bach's The Last Sufferings of Christ

April 12, 2020 • 8am, 11am and 3pm
Easter Day Services

May 7, 2020 • 7:30pm
American

June 6, 2020 • 11:00am
101st Commencement Exercises and Prize Day

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