

The Abbey Message

Subiaco Abbey

Vol. 80, No. 4

Spring 2025

Inside

2

Abbot's Message

4

Abbey Journal

Winter Notes

9

Development

Tributes Support Subiaco

12

Academy

Subiaco Stands Out

14

Alumni

Alumni News

Contact Information

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www.subi.org

www.subiacoacademy.us

Partners in Ministry

by Beth Everett, Development Department

Whenever it is time for another big bulk mailing, such as sending out this publication, I get out my trusty list of volunteers and start calling. I always wonder what they think when they see our number pop up on their caller ID. Do they think about all the things they have to do at home before answering because they know what I am going to ask? "Can you come and help the monks stuff envelopes for a couple of days?" I always feel blessed when they answer the phone, and they say "Yes" to my request. These "yesses" are the continuation of a long-term relationship that the monastery has had with area partners in many of its ministries. A partnership that has its beginnings in the very earliest days of the settlement of the land by the first monks to arrive and the "colonists."

In the very first few weeks after Fr. Wolfgang Schlumpf and his brother monks arrived in Logan County in 1878, local settlers pitched in to help in the construction of the church and monks' living quarters. These local men gave generously of their time despite having much to do on their own land to establish their homes and farms. The local people were seeking opportunities to practice their faith, and this hunger would help drive the growth of Subiaco and its ministries in the years to come.

Over the years, the monastic community could count on the assistance of area residents with special projects and in times of crisis but still performed most of their work and daily tasks themselves. Fr. Jerome Kodell describes that there were many local people willing to help and this combined with the need for assistance resulted in the decision to "open the door" to a greater volunteer presence. Now, many individuals are involved in



Fr. Richard Walz, '59, and Ron Geels in the Brewery

Partners in Ministry

various ministries, building relationships and friendships with the monastic community while working side by side with the monks.

Fr. Richard Walz inspires many people to lend a hand in the production of the Abbey's famous hot sauce. From assistance with harvesting the habanero pepper crop to producing and bottling the sauce, he increasingly relies on the core of experienced volunteers he has cultivated like his peppers.

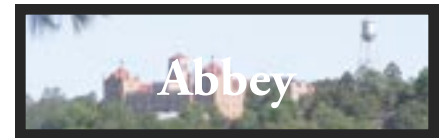
For many Abbey supporters, the holidays are not complete without the delivery of the famous "Abbey Brittle." Brittle production is another area where success would not be possible without the help of volunteers from near and far. Fr. Richard leads the charge here as well, enlisting the help of his family, to work alongside our local volunteers and others who travel from all over to be involved. The process requires cooperation, coordination and hard work. We are lucky again to have many volunteers who answer the call. Many report how much they enjoy being involved in this ministry that puts the Abbey in front of many brittle recipients and a part of many holiday traditions.

Relationships between members of the Knights of Columbus councils in Arkansas and Texas and the monastic community have developed through the years due to the willingness of those members to carry out *Ora Et Labora* retreats at the Abbey. For many years now, the grounds and facilities of the Abbey have benefited from the work these council members come to do, spending part of their time in spiritual development and the other in manual labor, establishing lifelong friendships with the monks in the process.

Another area where the involvement of invested parties has been critical is in the Abbey's apostolate of the Academy. Helping with the annual spring festival, working in the concession stand, planning special events for the boys, or providing treats to make them feel more at home are all ways that local and boarding families contribute to the community and family feeling that is unique and special to this place. Subiaco alumni are also an essential part of this. In addition to the time spent lending a hand whenever possible at sporting and other events, many alums have returned to campus to share their life experiences and wisdom with the students as they look ahead to their futures after high school. Additionally, the traditions of Camp Subiaco continue because of the involvement of the Alumni Association. The Camp, originally begun by the monks in 1941, is now operated and staffed primarily by alums, former campers, current students and friends so boys from across the country can continue to make memories each summer like generations before them.

And, of course, there are those steady, dedicated ladies (and gentlemen) who come to help with our mailings. Stuffing envelopes can be a tedious task but the friendly atmosphere and light-hearted banter that is present in the Monks' Library as volunteers work side-by-side with the monastic community to complete this work reminds us of the importance of this long-standing partnership that has been critical to the building up the ministries of Subiaco Abbey.

From the pepper fields to the flower gardens, the carpenter shop to the Coury House, and everywhere in between, the strong partnerships that began long ago have become such a blessing to Subiaco Abbey. These volunteers know that their contributions are valued and that they are regularly being prayed for by the monks. The opportunity to share their faith with and provide spiritual growth and guidance to these friends, perhaps without even realizing it is happening, is an even greater blessing to the monks than the work being performed. I know the monastic community shares my gratitude that these partners continue to answer when they see "Subiaco Abbey" on their caller ID. 🌿



Peanut Brittle Production



Eugene Didion '87 and Mike Welch '70, longtime stalwarts at Camp Subiaco



Who Founded Subiaco?

Dear Friends in Christ,

This answer is not always easy for me! I could tell you about Mr. Anthony Hellmich, editor of *Amerika*, a German publication with a nationwide circulation in America. It was Hellmich, a man from St. Louis, who happened to persuade Abbot Martin Marty of St. Meinrad to send monks to establish a new German Catholic colony in Arkansas. I could tell you about the Arkansas Land Commissioner and Bishop Fitzgerald, whose collaboration with the Railroad helped bring this colony to life. Or about Henry Voelkerding, who welcomed the three founding monks into his home, offering them a simple meal of eggs, cornbread, and coffee as they journeyed toward what would become Subiaco.

Those monks (Father Wolfgang Schlumpf, Brother Kaspar Hildesheim, and Brother Hilarin Benetz) arrived on their new land on March 15, 1878. Yet, they had no supplies for celebrating Mass. Only when provisions arrived on March 18 could they offer their first Eucharist, accompanied by a young layman named Joseph Gruwe (pictured) who would later become a monk of St. Meinrad. Gruwe was a Westphalian immigrant who worked as an architect in Chicago. He had heard from a friend in Illinois about the monastery forming in Logan County, and—through what he believed to be the prompting of the Holy Spirit—he left everything behind and made his way unannounced to Arkansas. His first act upon arriving? Building the altar for that first Mass at Subiaco. I could even tell you about Frank Mueller and Ben Forst, our first workers, or Andrew Kehres, who helped build our first church. I could tell you about the sisters from Indiana who joined the monks in the same year and founded what is today the Monastery of St. Scholastica.



Did you notice the pattern? Each of these individuals had a hand in founding Subiaco. I recount these stories because I am often frustrated when people ask, “*Who founded Subiaco?*” Some say Father Wolfgang Schlumpf, since for years he was listed as the founder only because he was a priest. Others expand the answer to include Brother Kaspar and Brother Hilarin, who arrived with him. But let’s be clear: God also sent Hellmich, Abbot Martin, the Land Commissioner, Bishop Fitzgerald, Voelkerding, a young man from Chicago named Joseph Gruwe, Mueller, Forst, Kehres, the Sisters, and countless others whose names are known only to God.

Cicero famously wrote, *Nihil fit casu*—“Nothing happens by chance.” I prefer an old monastic phrase: *Nulla res est fortuita apud Deum*—“Nothing is by chance with God.” From this idea, Pope St. John Paul II often reminded us, “*In the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences.*”

All of us have been called—each in our own mysterious way—to be part of the mission and ministry of Subiaco. You are not merely “volunteers,” as the American lexicon might suggest. No, no, no! In the monastic vision, you are partners and collaborators in this divine project, crafted by God Himself. This is your Abbey as much as it is mine.

So, maybe it’s time to change your possessive adjectives. *Your* abbot and *your* abbey thank you for your partnership in this sacred and wondrous work that is your abbey, Subiaco!

With gratitude,

+Abbot Elijah Owens

The Adolescent in the Temple

by Fr. Jerome Kodell, OSB

The only event between Jesus' infancy and manhood recorded for us in the Gospels is the story of the finding of Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:41-50). The main theme of this episode is the priority of the will of the Father over every other claim in Jesus' life and ministry, but there are other elements which underscore the historicity of the event and illuminate the development of Jesus as a human being and his growth into his divinely appointed role as Messiah and Redeemer.

Our faith tells us that Jesus is true God and true man, fully divine and fully human. We don't have any experience of being divine, but we know very well what it means to be fully human. It is hard for us to attribute to Jesus the weaknesses we experience as human beings, and we are tempted to feel that his divinity overcame all that. But, as the Letter to the Hebrews puts it, "Jesus had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way" (2:17), and "He was tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin" (4:15).

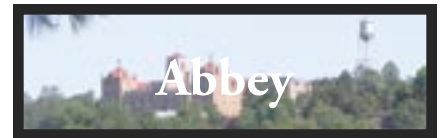
Twice, St. Luke tells us that Jesus "grew and became strong" (1:80; 2:40), but we have no evidence of the human development of Jesus, because the stories are about his infancy before any development, and about his public ministry when he was already a developed adult. The story of the finding in the temple is an exception and gives us a glimpse of Jesus in development, an adolescent on the way to maturity as an adult.

Everything in the story reported by Luke has the mark of authenticity. We can understand how Jesus' parents did not worry about keeping track of his every movement when


relatives and neighbors came from their hometown as a group and moved around at the feast like a large family. They also may have realized that Jesus was beginning to be of the age when he would want to test his wings without feeling under surveillance at all hours.

Parents can understand the panic when Mary and Joseph could not find Jesus in the usual places and did not know where he was. And they can sense the exasperation in Mary's question: "Son, why have you done this to us?" We may feel that the response of Jesus seems to miss the point and is even cold: "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

But if we remember our own adolescence we may find Jesus' response more understandable. At that age, events and thoughts happen one at a time and decisions are clear. We are puzzled why everyone doesn't see things our way. We haven't yet learned, usually the hard way, that issues are complicated and can be interpreted in different ways. Jesus is surprised that his parents can't



see what he sees; in fact, that they cannot read his adolescent mind. That adolescent mind has not seen the issue from his parents' side, so he wonders why they were worried.

This story is very important for our faith in Jesus' humanity. We may have thought that surely the son of God did not have to experience adolescence. But "he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every way." The good news is that this adolescent incident didn't end in rebellion. "Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them" (Luke 2:51). And with the help of his parents, Jesus continued to develop until he became a mature adult, ready for the mission assigned him by his Father. 

PRAYER HOTLINE 1-800-350-5889

Let us join you in praying for your needs. Prefer to email?
Please direct your requests to prayer@subi.org

Prayers requested for family and friends can include a wellness or sympathy card sent to them from the monks of Subiaco. Please provide the name and address to send the card with your requests.

Memorials for deceased family and friends or **Living Tributes** for birthdays, anniversaries, or special occasions are available at www.countrymonks.org/supportus or call 479-934-1001.





The Oblate Brief

by Jeanette Redford, Obl.S.B.

“Ah, sore was the suffering borne
By the body of Mary’s Son,
But sorer still to Him was the grief
Which, for His sake
Came upon His Mother.”

“The Crucifixion” by a twelfth Century Irish Monk

Even if we did nothing but meditate on that poem during Lent, we could come to Easter Sunday with a fleshly heart overflowing with love and humble thankfulness for the magnanimous gift given to us in Jesus’ death and resurrection.

That suffering, that heart-wrenching time for Mary and Jesus, carries the heaviest stamp of the Benedictine motto, “Ut in omnibus glorificetur deus” imaginable. “That in ALL things God may be glorified.” It is easy to see how God was glorified in that horrible passion and death, and we are glad that it happened because we reap the benefit of this gift. Still, it is only after the Resurrection that we realized the glory in the crucifixion. Did they think at those moments, during Mary’s agony, and Jesus’ agony at watching His mother suffer because of Him, and the hollow, lonely cry of Jesus asking His Father why He had forsaken Him... “it’s ok, there is glory in this?” Theologians can tell us, but I cannot fathom it.

When life is going along quite smoothly it is easy to thank God for everything but, in those heart-wrenching moments that buckle our knees and cause us to cry out to God for help, do we think “it’s ok, there is glory in this?” It is only after the cries, tears, pleading and finally placing the pain in the loving hands of Jesus, then feeling His grace and touch, that we can consider there is glory in the suffering. There is peace in knowing that we are not walking in the struggle alone. He is there. UIOGD!

The Oblates’ patron saint is St. Frances of Rome (1384-1440). She had a share in giving glory to God in suffering. An almost comical portrayal of her is given in one of the stories of her life. She had her heart set on being a nun, but her father insisted that she could not be a nun but would marry a nobleman he had chosen for her. She was crying to her confessor, who said to her, “*Are you crying because you want to do God’s will or because you want God to do your will?*”

In obedience to her father, she married and had her first of three children at seventeen. She lived the Benedictine example of a Christian life within a secular environment.

You can delve into her life online and read or listen to all the tales of obedience, struggle, loss, illness, plagues (two of her children died), a war that injured her husband and took one son hostage, famine, miracles, robbery, and Guardian angel accounts. After her husband died, she started an order of Oblates attached to the Benedictine order. Her feast day is March 9.

The next Oblate retreat will be held May 2 – 4. You may call the Coury House at 479-934-1290 for reservations.

Abbey Journal

by Fr. Mark Stengel, OSB

DECEMBER

A report on the Outdoor Adventure Program spoke of exploring the bluff lines of Rich Mountain and “two remote waterfalls.” That brought back memories, for sure. I was often part of Fr. Hugh Assenmacher’s Sunday

afternoon excursions to those spots, and I know the unofficial names we assigned to the natural features: Twin Falls, Betsy’s Pool, Devil’s Backbone, Inspiration Point. It is good to see that Mr. McDaniel is managing to get students away from their phones and video games into

the great outdoors again.

December brings several big mailings. Br. Joseph Heath is in charge of getting a crew for this chore of collating materials and stuffing envelopes. He alerts several monks who are on call for this, and the Development Office Staff, calls

volunteers from the neighborhood. These ladies (mostly) turn a tedious job into a pleasant social event. There is a lot of laughter, good-natured joking around, sometimes donuts. The women get to see the humanity of the monks, and we hear about their families and concerns, and the chore is greatly shortened by their help. Some of the monks regularly on the crew are Brothers Joseph, Roch, Anthony, Matthias, José, and Ephrem. Hmm. Where are the Fathers? Actually, Fr. Mark and Fr. Jerome show up with some regularity.

On December 20, just after the departure of the students for Christmas Break, the monastic community hosts a party for all teachers and staff of the Academy, and the members of all Abbey departments and their spouses or significant others. The party features a bar, a good meal, door prizes, corn hole competition, and other party games. This year there was an *hors d'oeuvres* competition. Partygoers vote for their favorite. In the interest of well-informed voting, one has to sample all the offerings, which necessitates another drink, and the party gets merry. It's a good community-building event and fun relaxation after the rigors of finishing the first semester.

JANUARY

The winter Journal concluded with the report of a small change in the *horarium* of the monastery. "*Horarium*" is our Latin word, (from *hora* – hour) for the daily schedule. Our schedule had remained basically unchanged for my 60 years in the monastery. There had been several short-lived experiments with the schedule. A recent questionnaire sought input for any desired changes, but no suggestions gained any traction. One could interpret such steadiness with that positive term—

steadiness—or see it negatively as our being “stuck in a rut.” Actually, our vows of stability and of “*conversatio morum*” might be seen as involving a tension between steadiness (blooming where one is planted) and the striving for growth and new blooms.

Anyway, that 15-minute change was just the warmup. Abbot Elijah next suggested that we examine our morning schedule, which gets us finished with Lauds, Lectio, Mass and breakfast by 7:30 a.m. This pell-mell rush enabled our monk farmers to get out to the fields before the heat of the day set in, and enabled Academy teachers to polish up lesson plans before classes began at 8. However, the farm is gone—well, leased out—and rarely now must a monk be in the classroom at 8. Also, visitors and students and prospective candidates have a hard time appreciating monastic life if it has to begin at 5 a.m. So, after a trial run of getting up an hour later, the community met again to discuss the pros and cons of such a schedule. It seemed that the whole experiment was headed for rejection, when an astute monk suggested that a 45-minute change instead of an hour would take care of the problems encountered in the later schedule. This proposal was adopted and seems to be working. So, now we begin Lauds at 6:30 every day of the week. This is 45 minutes later than the previous weekday schedule, and 15 minutes earlier on Saturdays and Sundays. So, **6:30**; that's the start time, every day!

Some monks have a keen eye for interior decorating, others could care less. Some have an up-to-date wardrobe; others wear whatever comes next on their closet hangers or shelves. An interesting “contest” of sorts occurred recently in the fourth floor common room, relating to this difference in styles and



sensibilities. Someone had placed a large, beautiful, frosted glass vase on the low central magazine table. But it was filled with rubbish! Even I could see “that’s not right” and I cleaned it out. Someone else found a really nice small table for it and placed it tastefully. But that table was appropriated for another use and the vase went onto the long computer table against one wall. Then someone found a rickety stand like an upended crate for the vase. Soon that crate disappeared and the vase was put on the window sill. From there it disappeared entirely and was found a week or so later in a storage room, where it now remains. The moral of the story? I refer you to Mark Twain’s famous preface to Huckleberry Finn: “Persons attempting to find a moral in this narrative will be banished, . . . those attempting to find a plot in it will be shot.”

Arkansas weathermen are learning new terms in this era of global warming—and they really like to use them! Words like “thundersnow” and “derecho” and “polar vortex” and (especially) “rotation” now flesh out the cliché phrase for Arkansas weather: “If you don’t like the weather, wait ten minutes.” In the second week of January, the forecast of snow spooked school districts into closings, well before and after the big snow of January 9-10. We got nine inches, the most for many years. The maintenance crew pulled a brand-new snow blower out of storage. It had been given as a raffle prize some years ago, but never raffled. Who would buy chances on a snow blower, in Arkansas? Well, Scott Mertin put it to good use most of the day after



Journal *cont'd from page 5*



the snow. Others cleared parking lots with blades and loaders, piling the snow into impressive snow sierras. Fr. Mark was the only one to do the “right” thing in a snowstorm, building a grinning snowman in scarf and hunters-orange cap. Brandi Bourg of the kitchen staff hunkered down in Coury House for a couple days so that we might have hot food on the table during the snow holidays.

A group from Texas A & M had planned a tent-camping retreat on Mt. Magazine with Sunday Mass at the Abbey in late January, but predictions of single digit wind chills on the mountain scared them away. And we thought Aggies were tough! By the end of the month, the spillway of the Abbey water supply lakes roared with overflow. A jutting boulder at the base of the concrete spillway flung a plume high into the

frigid air.

FEBRUARY

Most of the community were back on their feet again after late January flu bugs, stomach bugs, intestinal bugs. There were many sudden departures from choir, and sometimes the organ accompaniment at Vespers was cut short before we reached the Magnificat. This writer swears by the flu shot; for me, it has been “safe and effective.”


Prior Richard strongly urged monks with anniversaries this year to attend the Consecrated Life Day in Little Rock on February 8. His arm-twisting got the class of 1965—the three of us who made first vows together 60 years ago—to attend. He even did the driving! We three sexagenarians in religious life—Brother Jude, Brother Adrian, and myself—were the only three jubilarians actually present at the Mass and dinner. Bishop Taylor presented the plaques and commented that this was the first time that he made such presentations to men only. Usually the Sisters dominate. The three of us, now all 80, remain quite active. Br. Jude is “artist in residence” in the woodworking and laser engraving business, Br. Adrian serves as Subprior, assigning transportation, assisting in the Treasurer’s office, and gardening. Fr. Mark is pastor of St. Benedict’s parish and of St. Scholastica Church in Shoal Creek, about 15 miles east of Subiaco.

That church just completed and celebrated a major church renovation. Fr. Jerome, Br. Matthias, and Br. Francis represented the Abbey at the celebration. Prioress Kimberly, and Sisters Madeline, Leona, and Dolores Vincent came from St. Scholastica Monastery in Fort Smith. Shoal Creek was

the first home of the Benedictine Sisters in Arkansas, coming to Logan County in 1879. The convent moved to Fort Smith in 1924, and the former convent building burned in 1940. The Sisters retain the property and a presence up to the present. Sr. Louise, the foundress of the Hesychia House of Prayer, lives at the site, along with Sisters Lisa and Anita, Mercy Sisters who conduct operations at the House and its five hermitages.

Bishop Taylor was impressed by the renovation and by the fact that it was paid for without borrowing any money. The only *faux pas* was his comment that “the smaller the parish, the better the food.” Then we went to the hall for a catered meal, which was fine, but not the layout of everyone’s best recipes, as featured at parish pot luck dinners.

The Academy observed Catholic Schools Week, January 26-February 1, in impressive style. The week focused on pilgrimage, in keeping with the Jubilee Year theme, “Pilgrims of Hope.” The students watched “The Way,” a Martin Sheen film about a pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago in Spain. Fr. Cassian gave a presentation on the idea of pilgrimage. The entire school and staff traveled to St. Edward Church in Little Rock, one of the designated pilgrimage churches of the diocese, for prayer and Mass. On the last day of the week, all students spent a period of Eucharistic Adoration in the Abbey Church. Their *camino* took them to the “source and summit.”

February ended with another polar vortex driving temperatures down to 30 degrees below average. They say this is all part of global warming, but it does not feel like it—at all. 



All Work, No Play

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development Operations

My mother used to say that busy hands get into less trouble. I suppose that was her interpretation of Proverbs 16:27, which says “Idle hands are the devil’s workshop.” I tend to believe that my mother used such sayings to keep all twelve of her children busy and perhaps our minds a bit afraid of the devil taking power over us. At least for some of us, it worked! I remember times during the late summer when our family would make a trip to the peach orchard and pick several bushels of Arkansas peaches. It was fun—until we returned home, and the preserving part began. We each had a job in this process. Washing, peeling, slicing, packing the jars, adding the sugar, and so on until the jars were ready for processing and sealing. It was a full day’s work, sometimes more than one day if there was a bumper crop that year. But my mother knew that she had to give us a break during our work, lest the whining and complaining became too much. So, we would get to take a few breaks and go outside to toss a baseball or just run around for a while before returning to finish the job.

It wasn’t until I was older that I fully realized that while it is important to keep ourselves busy with necessary or obligatory work, there had to be a real balance in life. After all, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, right?

When I came to work at Subiaco Abbey, the balance in life took on an even greater meaning, as I began to witness how the monks balanced prayer and work, *ora et labora*. I wondered where their time for fun or recreation was. It did not take long to realize that people have different perspectives and understandings about fun. For the monks, it seemed that their fun came in things they found to be relaxing. Take Fr. Richard Walz for example. One of his greatest pleasures is digging in the soil, planting and harvesting good things to eat and to share with others. Gardening did not seem like a “fun” activity to me, but seeing his joy helped me to understand he had found an ultimate balance in life—prayer, work and recreation—even if the last two are actually one and the same.

As we examine our lives and do a bit of self-observance during the days of Lent, take some time to review your daily balance. Is there enough time for God and prayer, reading and reflection? Where in the day does this time with God happen? Or is too much time spent working and not enough in relaxing and enjoying the blessings God has given. Being overly focused on the tasks that we believe must be done can cause us to lose the possibility of discovery, flexibility, and openness to change. I would never have guessed that was the lesson my mother was teaching me by preserving peaches! 🌿



Through their ministry of prayer and hospitality, the monks of Subiaco offer the opportunity for a peaceful and spiritual final resting place. The Subiaco Abbey Columbarium is a repository for the ashes of people who have been cremated. For more information, we invite you to contact us.

Linda Freeman, Director of Development Operations
479-934-1029
lfreeman@subi.org
OR
Glenn Constantino, Procurator
479-438-2653
gconstantino@subi.org



Tributes Support Subiaco

by Linda Freeman, Director of Development Operations


Why is it that when we experience the loss of a loved one, we struggle to find a way to pay tribute to them? We know that praying for their soul and for peace and comfort for the family is the best way to acknowledge their pain and show our sympathies, but the human side of us feels that tug to do something more; something tangible. So, we wrestle with what to do—flowers, cards, gifts of food, or items that spark memories for those left behind are all good gestures and are appreciated by those who grieve the loss. All are excellent ways to show that you care about and understand the sadness they are experiencing, and that your desire is to bring comfort.

For others, being able to show tribute to a special person by supporting a cause or place that was important to them is a meaningful way to express condolences. It's a two-fold gift, honoring the life and legacy of the deceased and helping support ministries that they believed in. These tribute gifts, whether in memory or honor of someone, are a method of paying it forward or an extension of the ministry in the name of someone you hold dear.

Varying from year to year, Subiaco has experienced the benefits of those tribute gifts. Many alumni of Subiaco Academy have made it known to their families that in the event of their passing, they want any memorials to support the work of the monks in the education of young men. If they have a personal relationship with one of the monks, they may direct gifts to be used in whatever ministry that monk is most involved. Some are concerned about making certain that the healthcare of the monks is readily available and ask for gifts to help in that aspect.

There are infinite ways tribute gifts can be made, not just in times of loss. When you feel like honoring someone for their kindness or when a parent or friend deserves recognition for something special, but that person has repeatedly said they don't want gifts for themselves, making a gift in honor of them to Subiaco is a unique and heartfelt method to show how much you care about that person.

Special times for honoring our mothers and fathers are just around the corner in May and June. And I bet most of us who have living parents lament over what gift to buy them. But here's a little secret—as parents, we find great joy in knowing that our children see the passion we carry for different causes, and they too want to support those causes. A gift of tribute to parents, living or deceased, is a perfect way to show your love and admiration for them. Your gifts become transformational to the ministries they support, bringing life, love and happiness to those who benefit from your thoughtfulness.

If you are interested in ways you can make a tribute gift for someone special in your life while supporting Subiaco Abbey, visit our website at <https://countrymonks.org/tribute-gifts> or call us at 479-934-1001 and let us help you carry on the legacy of your loved one for the benefit of others. 



CAMP SUBIACO

Summer Camp 2025

Week 1 June 15-21
Week 2 June 22-28

A limited number of campers will be accepted.
An adventure based camp for boys ages 9-13

"For a summer of memories & a lifetime of friendships"

Camp activities includes:

- Go karts
- Archery
- Track & Field
- Canoeing
- Water skiing & tubing
- Fishing
- Swimming*
- Hiking
- Talent show
- Rock wall climbing
- Camping
- Crafts
- Rifery
- Zip Line
- Nightly prayers
- Other great surprises!

**A limited number of campers only*

For more information and to register visit campsubiaco.org

Camp fee: \$200
This includes a non-refundable \$100 deposit required to complete the registration process. 50% discount for 2 or more brothers from the same household. Fees include room and board, meals, materials, and all activities.

Organized and operated by Subiaco Academy Alumni, Inc. and fathers of campers with the monks of Subiaco Abbey.

Adult counselors to camper ratio 1:5
All counselors, CITs (counselors in training), and volunteers are trained in safe environment policies. CDC guidelines will be followed.



Trusting God Through Estate Planning

An estate plan is nothing short of doing what God wants us to do. As He tells us in John 14:1, “Do not let your hearts be troubled, you have faith in God.”

Have you ever been in a situation that felt so out of your control that all you could do was pray and plead with God to intervene? When our youngest son, Carson, was little, he ate some peanut butter crackers. Unknown to Angie and I at the time, he was born with a nut allergy. His breathing began to change, and as parents, you can imagine the fear that immediately gripped us. Thankfully, we were able to follow the proper protocols and administer medicine, along with some emergency prayers for God’s intervention to take over and bring our little man back to normal.

In moments like these, we often think about life as everything flashes before us in an instant. We all experience moments like this—whether it’s a lost child, an injured loved one, or our own personal challenges—where all we can do is hang our heads and plead with God to save us and help us. As an estate planning professional who helps people navigate life’s most difficult moments, I see firsthand how overwhelming and chaotic these situations can be, and how quickly life can change.

While professionals like me can help families navigate through these difficult situations, just like first responders, it is ultimately the presence of God that we long for most during our greatest times of need.

In the last edition of *The Abbey Message*, you may recall the importance of not leaving your estate to your state’s default plan. If you want to know whether the state’s plan is right for you, just ask someone who has lost a loved one and had to turn to the state to settle their affairs. Not good!



The good news is that you can avoid your state’s default plan by setting up your own estate plan, fully designed to meet the needs of your unique family. By incorporating the legal, practical, and spiritual protection you need, your family can have a complete plan and, most of all, peace of mind.

Creating a plan for your estate does not have to be overwhelming. When you put your affairs in order, you ensure that your loved ones and the causes you care about are protected while also avoiding the costly and lengthy probate process.

Reach out to me, and I will be happy to help you take the necessary steps to secure your legacy and provide for the people and causes you cherish most. Today is the best day to plan for the people we love. Let’s work together!

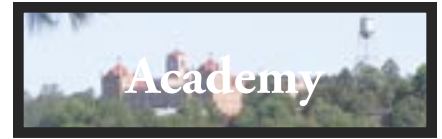
Contact Us at 479-847-2718 or via email glensing@subi.org. Alternatively, you can contact Fr. Reginald Udouj, OSB at 479-438-3901 or frreginald@subi.org.

Thank you for being a valued part of our Subiaco family. Your generosity makes our work here possible. 🦋

In the spirit of St. Benedict,

George M. Lensing
Director of Estate and Gift Planning





McDaniel Named to Arkansas Game & Fish Council

by Cheryl L. Goetz, Assistant Head of School for Academics and Communication

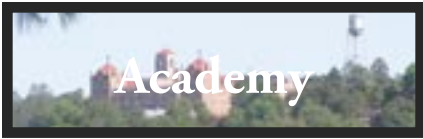
The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) strives to incorporate outdoor education in schools, not by just aligning AGFC offerings to Arkansas science standards, but by creating opportunities for teachers to make outdoor education part of the curriculum they are using and work they are already doing in the classroom. Mary Beth Hatch, Chief of Education for the AGFC, formed the Teacher Leader Council to involve teachers in the process of discovering and developing ways to integrate AGFC offerings to provide real-world experiences and learning into what teachers are already accomplishing in the classroom. This collaboration is not only important in the development of programs, but in also creating a group of team advisors that other teachers can turn to for information and assistance when they need it. Nine teachers around the state were asked to join the Teacher Leader Council in its inaugural year because they are considered successes at incorporating outdoor education into their curriculums. Nick McDaniel of Subiaco Academy was chosen to be a member of this council.

According to McDaniel, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has played a pivotal role in the development of Subiaco's Outdoor Education Curriculum: "The AGFC has provided us with grants, workshops, curriculum, and online resources that help me provide enriching experiences for our students." Now, he is happy to be invited to serve on the Teacher Leadership Council (TLC). One goal of the Leadership Council is to develop resources that meet the needs of Arkansas educators to teach conservation skills and concepts in their classrooms. They are currently developing a comprehensive Outdoor Leadership Curriculum that can be made available to Arkansas schools; in addition, they are aligning the state standards for the Hunter's Education Program (K-12). The TLC is also initiating a Conservation Education Conclave by next fall so that teachers can gather to collaborate regarding conservation awareness and outdoor education. This will likely include a statewide conservation education conference/competition for Arkansas students.

In addition to helping the AGFC's education division in curriculum alignment and development, McDaniel states that the TLC also learns from the AGFC education staff: "I have had the opportunity to visit multiple Arkansas State Parks and Visitor Centers. I've participated in exercises that I can bring back to the Hill, or I can now take students to these places. It has been a wonderful experience to travel to beautiful places across the state and collaborate with wonderful educators. I am blessed to work at Subiaco and live in the wonderful state of Arkansas."



Students Explore a Local Waterfall with Mr. McDaniel



Subiaco Stands Out

by Cheryl L. Goetz, Assistant Head of School for Academics and Communication

Students and their coaches have been working hard to achieve those high levels we have come to enjoy from Subiaco students. Some of our groups are still in the middle of competition, but here are some who have made notable achievements during this winter season:

The Future Business Leaders of America team attended the District Conference in Fort Smith on Wednesday, February 12. Eight competitors qualified for State in Little Rock on April 7-8: Stone Lee 1st place, Business Management; Luis Araujo 1st place, Banking & Finance Systems; Nathan Aquilar 2nd place, Personal Finance; Julian Gamino 2nd place, Introduction into Financial Math; Marvin Menjivar and Thang Khual 2nd place, Hospitality and Event Management; Lee Miller 4th place, Accounting I; and Aaron Pineda 5th place in Graphic Design. These young men are coached by Mr. Nathan Browning.

The Trojan Swim team competed in the 5A /4-1A Conference Meet at the Russellville Aquatics Center on Thursday, February 13. Overall, the Subiaco Swim Team placed fourth at the 4-1A West Conference Championships. Congratulations to Samuel Wu who took second place in the 200 Meter Freestyle and 100 Meter Butterfly. The swim team advances to the State competition on March 1. The swim team is coached by Ms. Michelle Chuang.

The Junior High Quiz Bowl team traveled to Batesville on Friday and Saturday, February 14-15, to compete in the State Tournament. The team placed 3rd overall in the State. Elliot Bray, Grayson Collins, and Henry Morrison were all named to the All-Star Team. Ms. MaryAnn Hoffower is in her third year as coach for the junior high team.

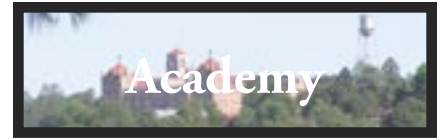
The Rock-Climbing teams competed at State on Saturday, February 15. The Trojan Junior High Team are State Champions. Eighth grader Wyatt Cowell placed 2nd overall and Nicholas Marley, also an eighth grader, placed 3rd in State as individuals. In Sr. High Varsity, sophomore Quinn Whitsitt placed 5th as an individual at State. Sophomore Jude Post placed 3rd in Sr. High JV as an individual. Mr. Nick Daniel, director of the Outdoor Education Program, coaches these young men and they have had an outstanding first year of competition. They are fine examples of good character, scholarship, and brotherhood.



Jr. High Quiz Bowl at State: Elliot Bray, Henry Morrison, Grayson Collins, Luke Garrison



Jr. High Rock Climbing Team: JP Simon, Isaiah Nix, Nicholas Marley, Wyatt Cowell, Callen Hayward, Coach McDaniel




Chastain Joins Academy Staff

by Dr. David W. Wright

Mr. Aaron Chastain joined the Academy staff in late January to assist the student services department in counseling and career curriculum development.

Aaron Chastain is a seasoned educator with over 35 years of experience in strategic communication, technical training and education. He holds a master's degree in educational administration from Arkansas State University and a bachelor's degree from Arkansas Tech University. Chastain spent 23 years as an education technology specialist, focusing on the integration of technology in educational settings to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. He is also a certified career counselor.

In addition to his technical expertise, Chastain has accumulated 12 years of experience in administration, where he managed and led programs, developed curriculum, and fostered strong partnerships within the community. Most recently, he served as a Community Partnership Specialist for post-secondary programs, a role that emphasized collaboration with local organizations and stakeholders to improve educational access and opportunities.

As a researcher and grant writer, Chastain has contributed to the development and implementation of modern, relevant education, securing funding to support innovative initiatives that advance learning and community engagement. Having lived in the local region all his life and the local community for the last 32 years, he is deeply committed to the growth and success of the Subiaco community. 



New look, same Subiaco spirit!

You may have caught a few glimpses of our refreshed identity—now, we're excited to officially introduce our new logo. More than just a design, it represents the unity of our entire community—Abbey and Academy, together. Over the coming months, you'll see it take its place across campus and beyond. Read all about the details in the 'News' section on our website and app. Onward Trojans! Onward Together!

The Abbey Message
is a composite quarterly
publication of Subiaco Abbey.

Publisher
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Editor in Chief
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and comments to:
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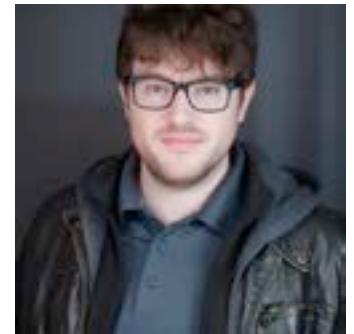


Alumni What's Up



The following information about our alumni was compiled by **Tom Canada '09**, Alumni Relations Director for Subiaco Academy. Have information you want to share with your Trojan brothers? Email Tom at tcanada@subi.org.

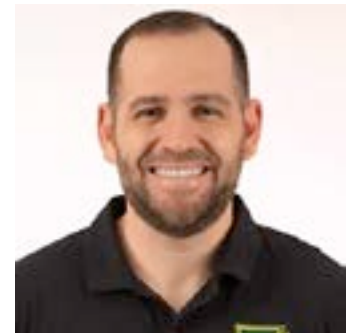
Alec Harter '09 recently accepted the position as Lead Network Reliability Engineer with JP Morgan Chase. Alec holds a Bachelor of Science in Information Technology with a concentration in Advanced Networking, along with numerous IT certifications.



Brandon Copsy '05 began a new position with AeroJet Rocketdyne as Lead Chief/Project Engineer. Brandon graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Cal State-Sacramento and has spent the past 13 years with AeroJet.



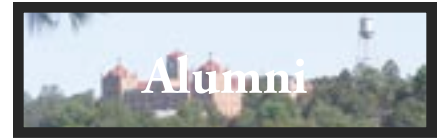
Kevin Wewers '07 is returning to Arkansas Tech University as the new Offensive Coordinator for the Wonderboys. He's been a part of the North Alabama (FCS) staff under Brent Dearmon since 2022, and previously worked alongside Dearmon at Bethel (NAIA - TN), Kansas, and Florida Atlantic. While with Dearmon at Bethel, Wewers got the rare opportunity to serve as a coordinator on both sides of the ball. In 2018, he served as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach and helped to assemble one of the top defenses at the NAIA level while helping Dearmon put together the program's first ever undefeated regular season.



Axel Ntamatungiro '17 graduated from Rice University with a BS in Neuroscience, accomplishing this in three years. After graduation, he began an internship at the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD. Currently Axel is finishing his second year of Medical School at Harvard! He will begin work on his PhD this summer.



Sending Brothers Home



† **John Hum, Jr., '45**, age 98, passed away January 13, 2025. He was the second of eleven children and was always a steadfast advocate for each of his siblings and their families. While a senior at Subiaco Academy, John was drafted into service for World War II at the age of 18. He enlisted in the US Army in May of 1945 and served in a cavalry unit. He was undergoing training for Operation Downfall, the planned invasion of Japan, when the war came to an end. After returning from the army, John embarked on a career as a traveling salesman for John Morrell Packing Company. Later, he worked alongside his father at the family-owned Jean's Market, then transitioned to Otasco where he excelled and won numerous awards for his productivity.



† **Pat Wardlaw '46**, age 96, passed away January 1, 2025. After graduation, Pat reluctantly went home to Del Rio, but soon, along with a handful of close friends, hitchhiked to San Antonio and joined the United States Marine Corps. After brief Military Police duty in San Francisco, he was shipped to the Panama Canal Zone and the 15th Naval District. There, he served guard duty on board ships transverseing the canal. During off duty times, he sometimes participated in "friendly" games of chance with his fellow Marines. After one evening of cards, his Irish luck won him an extremely large pot. He soon contacted Vicki, "his heart and soul; the light of his life," back in Fort Smith, AR, and asked for her hand. She accepted without hesitation. With his recently won fortune, Pat wired her the travel expenses needed for her long journey to Panama. After Pat's USMC days ended, the little family relocated to Del Rio and then to Waco, Texas, where he worked with his father in a sawmill and later pumped gas at a local station while attending Baylor University with assistance from the GI Bill. In 1961, his experience in building led to an easy move into insurance claims adjusting. Pat excelled in that rapidly growing field and quickly developed a reputation for honesty and expertise. Four years later he founded Wardlaw Claims Service. Still a leader in the insurance claims adjusting industry today after almost sixty years, Wardlaw Claims now handles catastrophic and day-to-day claims in all fifty states. Retiring from active management in 1993, Pat continued thereafter as consultant to the second, third and fourth generations of the family business.



† **Edward Knittig '56**, age 86, of Fort Smith, AR, died January 21, 2025. In the early 1960s, Ed proudly served as an MP in the Air National Guard, demonstrating his dedication to his country. He was a union sheet metal worker for 38 years. A man of faith, Ed and his wife, Annette prayed the rosary every day keeping family, friends, and any current needs in their intentions. He served on the parish council, as a Eucharistic Minister, and chair of the lawn social committee at St. Boniface for several years.



† **Robert Winter '58**, age 84, of Little Rock, passed away December 22, 2024. After graduation, he went on to attend Arkansas State University and the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, where he received a master's in accounting. He began his career in accounting at Peat Marwich in Little Rock, earning his CPA license. He founded his own firm, Rasco, Burriss & Winter several years later, where his legacy of honesty, integrity and personal service to clients continues. He had a lifelong commitment to Subiaco Academy, giving of his time, talent, and treasure. His untiring commitment to serving others included his time on the CARTI (Central Arkansas Radiation Therapy Institute) Board of Directors, which he chaired 2001-2002. He was treasurer and board member at United Cerebral Palsy for over 26 years. He was treasurer of the Lions Club, the Serra Club, and served on the Finance Committee at Christ The King Catholic Church.



† **Henry David Ashe '64**, age 78, passed away December 10, 2024. David attended several universities and colleges. He obtained degrees from North Texas and Murray State in Kentucky. David was employed as a Clinical Psychologist prior to moving to Georgia where he worked at Central State Hospital and served 28 years as the Executive Director of Clayton County Mental Health. During his retirement he was elected to serve on the Clayton County School Board.

Sending Brothers Home



† **Larry Smith '70**, age 72, of Little Rock, AR, passed away January 11, 2025. He graduated college in 1975, with a finance degree, from Arkansas State University while also working full time at Larry Smith Hardware and Auto Supply store. Larry would later buy the store from his dad and expand the store into what was called an “essential” business during the 2020 pandemic. Larry worked his whole life at the store first helping his mom and dad, and later as owner of the store. On April 7, 2000, Larry married Elizabeth Behringer Buckman. Elizabeth’s two children, **Seth Buckman '08** and Clare, were loved and cherished by Larry. Later that year, a daughter, Veronica, was born.



† **John Hall '73**, age 69, passed away November 2024. He is survived by two daughters; one son; and one brother, **Michael Hall '71**. Soon after graduating from Arkansas Tech in 1977, John went to work for Cooper Entergy Services in Denver, CO. He began his career as a mechanic, worked his way up through the corporation and finished his career as the Manager of the Southwest Region for Cooper.

Employee Spotlight: Donna Forst

One of the many things that make the Coury House a preferred place for private and group retreats is the staff of dedicated and faith-filled employees. Donna Forst is one of those employees every organization wants; she views her work as a way to share her faith with everyone who greets and serves at the Coury House and the Gift Shop. Here is her story.



My name is Donna Forst. I started at Coury House in the book store/gift shop in August 1998, and I had no retail training. I have a degree in journalism from the University of Arkansas and spent almost 10 years working at small newspapers in Oklahoma and then briefly in Greenwood, AR.

After one year at the University of the Ozarks in public relations, I jumped at the chance to work at the Abbey. A native of St. Benedict Parish, working at the Abbey brought me home to work in the parish and help with the care of my parents until their deaths.

The plan was to take over for Jean Rockenhaus when she retired from the reservations office at Coury House, but when Carol Geels came back to work at the Abbey, she and I decided she was best suited to the reservations office and me to the book store.

I’m not a shopper myself (or even much of a people person), but one of the best aspects of working at Coury House is the opportunity to serve others. It’s one of the best feelings to help someone with a gift that reflects the love of God for themselves or someone they love and/or appreciate or to help them find a space to spend some quiet time away from the busyness of their lives to remember and reconnect with God’s peace.

Upcoming Retreats

April

- 3-6 Tulsa Silent Retreat
- 7-10 Going Deeper Together 2.0 Men’s Retreat
- 11-13 Rolling Hills Baptist Church Retreat
- 14-16 Breaking Bread & Word Retreat
- 17-20 Easter Triduum/Walz Family Reunion
- 25-27 Serra Club Retreat

May

- 2-4 Subiaco Oblate Spring Retreat
- 10 Evening with the Monks
- 12-16 Artists’ Group Retreat
- 16-18 Graduation Weekend
- 30-Jun1 Alumni Reunion Weekend

June

- 2-6 DOLR Priests Retreat
- 6-8 Diocese of Tulsa Deacon Wives Retreat
- 19-22 DOLR Spiritual Director’s Retreat
- 27-29 Women’s Silent Retreat
- 27-28 DOLR Spanish Deacon Wives Gathering



All guests, either private or on group retreats, are welcome to join the monastic community for daily prayer and Eucharist.

For more information or for reservations, call the Coury House at 479-934-1290 or email couryhouse@subi.org

Upcoming events may be found on our website, www.countrymonks.org