



SAINT MICHAEL'S
COLLEGE FOUNDED
1904



OFFICE OF ALUMNI & FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

January 2024 eNews

New Year, New Purple Knights



Students and Mike the Knight cheering at a St. Mike's hockey game at Cairns Arena in South Burlington.

Dear Saint Michael's Community,

I can't think of a better way to start the new year than as a full-fledged Purple Knight! My wife, Mary, and I are thrilled join the community as I begin my tenure as Saint Michael's 18th president. Born and raised in Upstate New York, I have heard about this community for many years, and have always been impressed

with the devotion and loyalty of St. Mike's alumni. It speaks volumes about the quality of the education received here, the influence of the Edmundites, faculty and staff who become mentors and friends, and the lifelong friendships formed on this beautiful campus.

I am a first-generation graduate of Syracuse University and loved my time there. I relished my newfound independence, was thrilled by the opportunity to study what interested me and was inspired to forge a satisfying and meaningful career in higher education. I have worked at a number of institutions for over three decades, as a professor, department chair, dean, provost and president. From coast to coast and throughout my time in higher education, the things I value in a school are a commitment to liberal arts, diversity, equity, and inclusion, and ensuring that each student, faculty, and staff member has a true sense of belonging. Each person who calls this place home should value their role in this community and absorb what makes it unique and special. The Saint Michael's vision, *Do Well and Do Good*, deftly describes the lessons learned here and our expectations for students as they go out into the world.

Like many other schools, Saint Michael's has faced some tough challenges over the past decade, but I am very optimistic for the future. It has been known as a 'hidden gem' for far too long, but we're doing away with that notion. It's a gem that is not going to be hidden for a moment longer and we're going to do incredibly well going forward.

Mary and I are looking forward to working closely with the Edmundites, Trustees, faculty, staff, and students on innovative ideas and initiatives that will solidify the foundation of the College and allow it to thrive far into the future. I hope you will join me with your enthusiasm, loyalty, and generosity.

We will be getting out to meet alumni in a number of cities soon and look forward to meeting many more of you on campus for reunion, alumni weekend, and other festivities. As the newest Purple Knights, we are more than happy to share the enthusiasm and love for this wonderful place. Thank you for allowing us to be part of it.

Sincerely,
Richard Plumb
President

Tina Friml '16 Talks About her Debut on *The Tonight Show*

Tina Friml '16 just reached another pinnacle. Last month, the comedian performed on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, unleashing six minutes of standup that captured her life as a disabled person, her Vermont roots, and her childhood love of the rapper Drake's role on the television show *Degrassi*.



"You never feel 100% ready," Friml said in a recent phone interview about the milestone. "It was one of those moments where you climb over a mountain, and you look back and say 'I just did that. Somehow, I made it.'"

[Watch Tina on The Tonight Show](#)
[Read about her time at St. Mike's](#)



Martin Luther King Jr. Society Celebrates Student Leaders

On Dec. 3, the Martin Luther King Jr. Society hosted its first elegant evening with a formal dinner accompanied by an awards ceremony that celebrated students for their campus and community involvement. The event took place in the Roy Room and welcomed 170 attendees. Students, staff, and faculty enjoyed food, music, raffles, and an exciting awards ceremony in celebration of community and belonging. The Martin Luther King

Jr. Society executive board consists of Christine Dossou '25 (president), Kaltuma Ibrahim '25 (vice president), Damien Wortheim '26 (international representative), Jacob Duniver '24 (treasurer), and Darrel "DY" Yepdo '26 (marketing representative).

[Read more about the event.](#)

Yamuna Turco '25 Competes in Miss America

Yamuna Turco '25, who was crowned Miss Vermont 2023, competed for the Miss America 2024 title in Orlando, Florida this past week. The competition began Jan. 6 and lasted until the finals on Jan. 14.

"It's huge. I'm kind of in disbelief. It comes and hits me in waves," Turco said. "The fact that I have a one in fifty chance of being Miss America is insane to me."

[Read more about Yamuna.](#)



Baseball Team Spreads Holiday Cheer to Local Kindergarteners

On December 23, the Saint Michael's baseball team visited the Hinesburg Community School to spread the holiday spirit as senior captain Nate Rogers and assistant coach Matt Meunier organized a toy drive for 45 kindergarteners. Rogers said that the team was able to raise enough money to support a bag for each child stocked with pencils, Play-Doh, crayons, markers, chalk, a sticker book, and, of course, a foam baseball. The team

arrived to deliver the gifts in person just before departing for winter break.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Convocation Week Starts Monday

The Presidential Committee on the Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Convocation invites you to join the SMC community for the 32nd annual MLK Jr. birthday celebration and week of Convocation on January 15th. The 2024 event will consist of many presenters and activities for the entire community. More details below. Any questions can be directed to Vernita Weller - vweller@smcvt.edu (Purposeful Learning) or Laura Crain - lcrain@smcvt.edu (Director of Durick Library).

[To see the full schedule of events](#)



The Chapel at St. Mike's Becomes Christmas Light Inspiration

The Chapel of Saint Michael the Archangel – a main fixture on Saint Michael’s campus – is now a central character in an award-winning holiday display called “Christmas in Vermont.” Creator Richard Carilo began constructing the display 25 years ago. Carilo said it started with candy-canes and a couple of life-size nutcrackers “and just kind of grew from there” as he moved for work around the country, moving the display with his family. Carilo’s daughter, Sarah, graduated from Saint Michael’s College in 2016 while her family was still living in Palm Desert, California. They visited Sarah a few times while she was attending Saint Michael’s; she is currently working in Colchester as a first-grade teacher.

[Read more on the award-winning display](#)

Skiing from Norway to Vermont

This year, the Saint Michael's College Nordic Ski team has three Norwegian team members. Nordic skiing is ingrained in Norway's culture, and it is referred to as the center of the Nordic skiing world.



"Skiing is a part of the culture, everyone knows the sport well, which is a great difference from America," said Astrid Bakke '26, a member of team. "I would say it is special how skiing is a big part of our culture. Even though not all people ski, we have miles and miles of Nordic trails."

Molly Peters, the head coach of the Nordic ski team, explained her involvement in the recruitment process of her three Norwegian skiers. "A recruiter contacted me looking for a spot on our team, and so I worked with her to get Astrid over here," Peters said. "Then Astrid helped get Michael here, and Declan randomly found Henrik."

After she graduates, Bakke said she would like to stay in the United States but it will be difficult due to immigration policies. She said she will probably go back to Norway and get her master's degree at the Norwegian School of Economics. All three of the skiers said they are excited for the upcoming season. The first race weekend for the Nordic ski team took place in Craftsbury, VT this weekend.

[Read more on the Norwegian skiers.](#)



The Annual Career Symposium is Back and Better Than Ever!

The Alumni Board of Directors is excited to host the annual Career Symposium for students and alumni panelists on Friday, March 22nd. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to explore a variety of career paths available based on real world alumni

experiences and advice.

The symposium will feature the following thought-provoking topics for students to explore with alumni panelists:

- Doing Well and Doing Good – Finding your purpose in life and in your career
- Alternative/Entrepreneurial/Freelance – Not all career paths are “typical” or linear.
- Getting your first job – Thrive from day 1.
- Exploring Liberal Arts – Humanities major careers in the real world.
- Grad School – for you? When and why?
- Tech World – Data use and digital media career options and more.
- Going Green – Explore environmentally focused career opportunities.

If you are interested in being a panelist please email [Stephanie Snell](#), Director of Alumni Engagement.

The end of the day will include a networking event for students and alumni. Registration will open late February/ March. Keep an eye out for an email and updated links on our [events webpage](#).

French Club Visits Montréal!

For years, the French Club has ventured off to Montréal and Québec City throughout the academic year, and this fall was no different. The two day, one night trip was led by the three co-presidents: Cito DeNegre '24, Maddie Laquerre '24 and Frank Loveland '24. It was open to students of all majors and French levels to join in on the adventure and have a chance to cross the border that is only an hour north. The group consisted of ten students and two professors, the largest group since pre-Covid. The group visited the Museum of Fine Arts, Mount Royal Park, an annual Christmas market, and most notably, the Montréal Biodôme, which "consists of four distinct biospheres, each with its own climate conditions, habitat and animals," explained Professor Peter Vantine. Vantine is the Chair and Associate Professor of Classical and Modern Languages and Literature, and has been accompanying students on the



trip for the past few years. The group will travel to Québec City next semester for another trip before the three presidents graduate. Bon voyage!

[Read more about the French Club's trip](#)

Upcoming Alumni Events

In addition to the events highlighted below, we have plans in the works in a city near you! Keep an eye on [our events calendar](#) as details are confirmed. Interested in planning an event in your area? Email events@smcvt.edu.

March 22nd: Join us for our annual **Career Symposium!** Current Saint Michael's students will be able to attend panel presentations and network with alumni across industries to get a head start on their postgrad career. If you're interested in attending, participating, or being part of the planning process, please reach out to events@smcvt.edu.

May 31st - June 2nd: Save the date for **Reunion 2024!** We will be celebrating all class years that end in 4s and 9s, but as always, all are welcome! Bookmark smcvt.edu/reunion for forthcoming information about the weekend. Interested in serving on your class committee? Email events@smcvt.edu.



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