



北美風沙 The North American Lasallians AUGUST 2020



Courtesy of David Tong (01) from San Francisco Bay Area Chapter

In search of *Lasallite* 1955-56

As you may know, our late Peter Leung (52) donated all his *Lasallites* back to our Alma Mater more than 10 years ago. Our School has set up a [special link](#) in La Salle College Website to welcome back these treasures!

As you may have noticed when browsing through these Magazines, the year 1955-56 is not in the collection. We are asking anyone has a copy in hand and would like to share it with your fellow Lasallians? Your attention to this matter is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or know where we can locate a copy, please contact the publisher, many thanks!



Highlights for this issue

- Happy Birthday Brother Thomas!- pg 2
- La Salle brother receives human rights award in Philippines- pg 3
- Teaching Under the COVID-19- pg 5
- Football Is Not Quite Coming Home (Part 1)- pg 8
- Teaching and Lab Research in the Days of COVID-19- pg 9
- Pilgrimage to Reims, Birthplace of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (Part 2)- pg 10
- Memorabilia- pg 12

Happy Birthday Brother Thomas!



La Salle brother receives human rights award in Philippines

Source: [Catholics News Agency](#)



Brother Armin Luistro (center) visits a classroom, July 2013. Credit: Ilocos Norte via Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0).

A La Salle brother and educator has been given an award in recognition of his defense of human rights amid religious repression in the Philippines.

Amnesty International Philippines announced May 28 that the Ignite Award for Most Distinguished Human Rights Defender would go to Brother Armin Luistro, FSC, in the individual category.

AIP describes the award as its top honor for human rights defenders in the country and aims to recognize the impact their work brings in changing peoples' lives through mobilization, activism, rights-based policy advocacy, and art.

"It is necessary to shine a spotlight on those individuals who continue to pave the way for collective action. It is especially difficult now for human rights prime movers to take action amid the COVID-19 pandemic. We

note that we are in extraordinary times but the same human rights defenders are speaking out against repression during this crisis,” the chair of AIP’s selection committee said May 28.

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism received the same award for organizations.

Luistro professed his final vows as a La Salle brother in 1988. In June 2010, former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III swore in Luistro as Secretary of Education, a position he would serve in until 2016. He previously served as president of De La Salle University in Manila from 2006 to 2010, an institution he helped found in 2000. He also is former President of the International Association of the La Salle Universities.

Brother Luistro’s advocacy and commitment to education has not been well-received by everyone, particularly the current presidential administration of the Philippines.

During summer 2019, the Philippine National Police charged Brother Luistro, another La Salle brother, and some 35 other individuals including several bishops with sedition.

The police accused them of conspiring to overthrow President Rodrigo Duterte. The country’s Justice Department later dismissed the case for lack of evidence.

Tensions have increased between Duterte and the bishops as Church leaders have continued to condemn the president’s brutal war on drugs. Since Duterte’s rise to power in 2016, thousands of people have reportedly died in extrajudicial killings.

In a 2018 speech, Duterte said people should “kill and steal” from Catholic bishops, stating “this stupid bunch serve no purpose – all they do is criticize,” according to UCA News.

One of the arrested bishops, Broderick Pabillo, apostolic administrator of Malina, accused Duterte of blasphemy, after he called God “stupid” and a “son of a b-tch” during another 2018 speech. The bishop also publicly condemned the president’s claim that the majority of Philippine priests were homosexual.

Later that month, Duterte said that he was willing to dialogue with the country’s bishops’ conference in an effort to repair relationships, and the president’s spokesperson announced that a committee would be created to better collaborate and communicate with the Catholic hierarchy.

St. John Baptist de La Salle, the patron saint of teachers, was a 17th century French priest who established a lay community to offer a Christian education to the children of the poor that later grew into a new form of consecrated life, the “religious brotherhood,” in which “lay religious” take vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience without ordination.

Three centuries later, more than 4,000 Christian Brothers continue La Salle’s mission educational mission with a “preferential option for the poor” in 79 countries in conjunction with the Lasallian Sisters, Signum Fidei Fraternity, and Guandalupana Sisters de La Salle.

Teaching Under the COVID-19

Jeffrey Ng (76)

I am a physics professor teaching at University of Kentucky [1]. My expertise is in the experimentation of condensed matter physics [2]. The university has an enrollment of 30,000, of which 7,000 are graduate students. It is located in Lexington, a city with a population of 320,000.

Lexington is at the center of horse country, about an hour's drive from the state largest city Louisville.

The university community sensed the coming of the disease early on at the end of February. The American Physical Society abruptly cancelled its March Meeting in Denver, shortly after the first death was reported on February 29 in Washington State. This was the first time I experienced a meeting cancellation in my career. In the following week the university busily issued guidelines on airline and hotel bookings so the travellers could get reimbursed in the event other upcoming conferences were cancelled.

On Friday March 6, during a condensed matter faculty meeting, a phubber read from his phone about the first COVID-19 case in Kentucky. The patient was from a small town near Lexington and he was admitted to the university hospital. On that same day New York had 11 new cases, five days after its first confirmed case on March 1. Suddenly the physicists behaved like physicians in expressing their opinions on this new outbreak.

One common consensus was that the school would close very soon. I spent that weekend pondering what to do if I were asked to conduct class online. I was leaving for Dallas the following Friday, and planning to stay there during the week of spring break [3]. I had only a week to prepare for the worst.

I was teaching a freshman physics course about electricity and magnetism for the engineering students with about 130 students in the class. Homework assignments were already online [4], so homework was not a problem in this crisis. I chose a small company to provide this service. I thought a small company did not have too many users and it would be difficult for the students to look up shared solutions on the Internet. This turned out to be untrue. I was also using a teaching platform called Canvas to record and share class materials with the students [5]. This would provide a convenient portal to the online classes.

I used that weekend to look up university resources in teleconferencing and media sharing. Software like Echo360, Teams, YuJa and Zoom were readily available. Echo360 and Zoom were more commonly used in academia. I had attended many Zoom meetings, but never hosted one. On Monday morning, I tried both in the lecture hall. Echo 360 provided higher quality video, but not as interactive as Zoom.

Together with the fact that most of my colleagues were using Zoom, I decided to use Zoom as my online class platform. On Tuesday I was mastering the skill by having a Zoom meeting between three computers and my cell phone in my office. I was quite prepared on Wednesday when the school announced its closing after the spring break. In class that day I integrated Zoom into Canvas and briefly explained to the class what to do after spring break.

I had to host the online classes in the lecture hall because demonstrations could only be done there.

The last hurdle was that some equipment like the writing pad and overhead projector were not hard wired to the hosting computer. Some images on the lecture hall screens could not be transferred to Zoom. I spent Thursday working on connecting the lecture hall hardware to the hosting computer. The solution was not perfect, but acceptable. I had a real run with my teaching assistants by the end of that day.

On Friday, I had my last physical class. I did a practical run with the students. Using their own laptops, they could see the lecture in Zoom and toyed with different commands and settings. The students were far less confused after the trial. My preparedness gave them enough confidence to keep going in this difficult time.

This was the first time I felt the situation was under control. We said goodbye to each other at the end of the class and I left immediately for the flight to Dallas.

The flight was delayed for five hours, arriving Dallas at 1am. There were about 40 passengers in a plane of capacity 180. Nobody, including myself, wore a mask. I did have a good time during the first part of the week. I could go to enjoy dim sum without a long waiting line. The condition took a turn for the worse when rumor about Texas statewide lockdown was imminent. On Wednesday night we found many restaurants were closing and only a few served only takeout orders. Lockdown was a new concept to me and I could only link it to the Wuhan style lockdown. For three days I worried about the traffic to the airport and the cutoff of air travel. As we all know now the lockdown in this country was not airtight. I managed to come back to Lexington smoothly on Saturday. There were only 18 passengers on my return flight, but the airline was smart enough to use a smaller plane this time. Many passengers, including myself, wore masks.

It was such a relief to return home and I was excited about my first online class. I drove back to school on Monday morning. The campus was very quiet and peaceful. I wore a face shield and it was taken off when I was alone in the lecture hall. The staff in the demonstration room wore masks sewn by the department secretaries. It was an eerie feeling when talking to an empty lecture hall. Nevertheless the class went well and I did not encounter any serious problems in any subsequent classes. Though the class was recorded for students to access anytime, there were consistently about 80 students attending class at the scheduled time. Overall the online classes were well received by the students, though there are still improvements to be made if I have to do this again next semester.

On April 1, I gave the last test before the final examination. Since this was an online test, I used the online homework system to facilitate the process. There were intense discussions among faculty about cheating in online tests. There are programs to lockout student computers from the Internet [6], But this does not prevent students from using another computer or cell phone to access the Internet. There are also proctoring services which can monitor every student through the computer camera [7]. Many of these services require additional payment from students. I felt these measures were too intrusive, especially when the students were working at home. I relied on the honor system and hoped for the best. The result was shocking. With a perfect score of 100 points, even the worst students got more than 80 points in this test. The class average rose more than 20 points from previous tests. I knew there was wide spread cheating, but I didn't know how they did it.

Until one day I copied a sentence of a test question into Google, the whole question and solution immediately popped up. I never expected the questions from this small online homework company to be so exposed. For this I made up all questions in the final examination and make sure there was no Google match

in any part of the questions. I asked the online homework company to upload these questions into their system. I monitored the progress made by the students during the exam. The grade distribution was very similar to the in-class tests before the lockdown.

Seminars and colloquiums were conducted on Zoom for the remaining of the semester. In my experience the quality of a virtual seminar was just like an in-person one. This could be the future trend as a way to reduce attendees' travel expense. Quite possibly Zoom conferences will spring up after this pandemic. All research activities came to a halt after spring break. Only necessary maintenance work or COVID-19 related researches were allowed. The university is planning to resume research in four phases. At the time of this writing we are at phase 2, only time-sensitive and critical researches are allowed in the laboratories.

The university was in dire financial situation. The administration expected a sharp drop in enrollment for the next academic year, and also severe cut in state funding. The university hospital was in the red because many money making operations had to be delayed or cancelled to make room for the COVID-19 patients. Bad news came one after another since the shutdown. There was an immediate hiring freeze, including postdocs. All summer classes would be taught by graduate students instead of faculty members. University matching for the 403(b) was reduced from 10% to 5% for one year [8]. Colleges were preparing for across-the-board budget cut. By the end of May the university announced the furlough of staff members over the summer. That applied to two secretaries and nearly all shop workers in the physics department. The furloughed could apply for unemployment benefits from the federal government. The good news was the university promised not to lay off any employees in the next year.

Latest news: On June 16, the university announced to reopen for the Fall semester. All student dormitories and food services will reopen. Viral testing will be provided for all students when they return to campus. Students and workers are required to wear masks, unless alone in a room or mask wearing interferes with classroom activities. Social distancing will be observed, but they do not detail how to practice this for large lecture classes and laboratory classes. The semester will begin one week earlier than the regular schedule. There will be no holiday on Labor Day nor fall break. Classes will end at Thanksgiving and students can stay home after the break.

[1] I am thankful to Mr. S. L. Chiu, Mr. Henry Lau, Mr. P. S. B. Nair, Mr. Y. H. Ng, Mr. M. K. Shum, Mr. David Tang, Mr. Kwan Yik, and Mr. H. S. Yu in teaching me Mathematics and Physics when I was in LSC. In particular I want to thank Mr. Kenneth Chan in LSPS who enlightened me on the beauty of mathematics when I was in P5 and P6.

[2] Condensed matter physics is a subfield of physics in the study of solid state, fluids, and soft matters like liquid crystal, polymers, and biological materials. I am more in the study of solid state.

[3] Spring break was from March 16 to March 20.

[4] Most problems in online homework are calculation type problems. For the same question the webpage generates random variables for each student so students cannot copy answer directly from their friends. Most textbook publishers have their own online homework service. The one I used was an independent company focused on Physics.

[5] The two learning management platforms most commonly used by universities in this country are Blackboard and Canvas.

[6] For example, the one used by University of Kentucky was the Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor.

[7] An example is ProctorU. This is effectively an online proctoring service. Students are monitored through a webcam and a microphone. Each student has to pay \$25 for a two hour exam or \$5 if I do the proctoring myself.

[8] 403(b) is the 401(k) for universities and charity organizations.

Football Is Not Quite Coming Home (Part 1)

Danny Leung (71)

*During COVID there is really not much to do. Why not talk about soccer then. Danny is here to share with you why he thinks **England Will Probably Not Win Another World Cup**. Hmm. Mixed feelings for a lot I am sure.*

1. The statistics. How many times did each major European nation played in the World Cup and the European Championships semi finals?

- Germany, 22 times: 1934, 1954, 1958, 1966, 1970, 1972, 1974, 1976, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016.
- Italy, 13 times: 1934, 1938, 1968, 1970, 1978, 1980, 1982, 1988, 1990, 1994, 2000, 2006, 2012.
- France, 9 times: 1958, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1998, 2000, 2006, 2016, 2018.
- Holland, 9 times: 1974, 1976, 1978, 1988, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2010, 2014.
- Portugal, 5 times: 1966, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2016.
- England, 5 times: 1966, 1968, 1990, 1996, 2018.
- Sweden, 4 times: 1950, 1958, 1992, 1994.

In the cruel world of football, results and records do count!

2. Exhausting long season. England's regular season schedule is as heavy as most of the other major European nations: EPL, Serie A, La Liga, and Ligue 1 all play 38 matches per season, with only Bundesliga playing 34. On top of this, the English league plays two domestic cup competitions per season, whereas the other major European leagues only play one. These English cup games involve minor division clubs who will always try to send out their best in-form players to topple the teams in the EPL. A tied game will see a replay instead of an immediate penalty shootout. English players end up exhausted after a long and grueling season. Moreover, the English style of play is fast, physical and competitive, with non-stop action, so that every game is demanding and energy sapping, even if it is against a bottom-rung opponent. Other major leagues in Spain, Italy and Germany see more possession-based and at times calculated football, i.e. slow down the game and look for space, instead of all-out action. One could say continental football requires more thinking than running.

There is also **Turkey Fixtures**, the infamous and congested week between Christmas and New Year when the English play three extra matches for the festive season, while all the other European leagues are resting up on their winter breaks. The English club owners will not forsake gate receipts or lucrative TV revenue during this time. By contrast, other major European teams get a nice long break: for example, the Germans usually rest for a full month without playing any competitive games, which they start training indoors in the third week. This gives players enough time to recharge their batteries.

To top it off, there's the **UEFA Champion League Group Stage**. This is the most lucrative annual competition in the world of football: the prize reaches the double-digit millions, even for lower-ranked clubs who qualify. To move from the round-robin group stage into the knockout stage for the New Year, the top ranked English teams go all-out playing and are drained by the New Year.

So there really is no rest for the English clubs with national team players running out of steam or facing injuries before any major summer tournaments (to be continued).

Teaching and Lab Research in the Days of COVID-19

Fred Tse (76), Department of Pharmacology, University of Alberta

In mid-March 2020, while I was recovering from a knee replacement surgery, schools (from kindergartens to universities) in North America started to lockdown. Most university courses and even small group tutorials (with a few exceptions such as some clinical courses) were delivered online and research labs not related to COVID-19 were closed.

In June, some businesses in the Province of Alberta were allowed to restart at least partially and my university announced that research labs previously closed could apply to re-open with restrictions. Yet in the same announcement we were told that for the term starting September 2020, online delivery of most courses will continue.

Here I shall summarize the few options that are available for us to deal with the current restrictions on teaching and research.

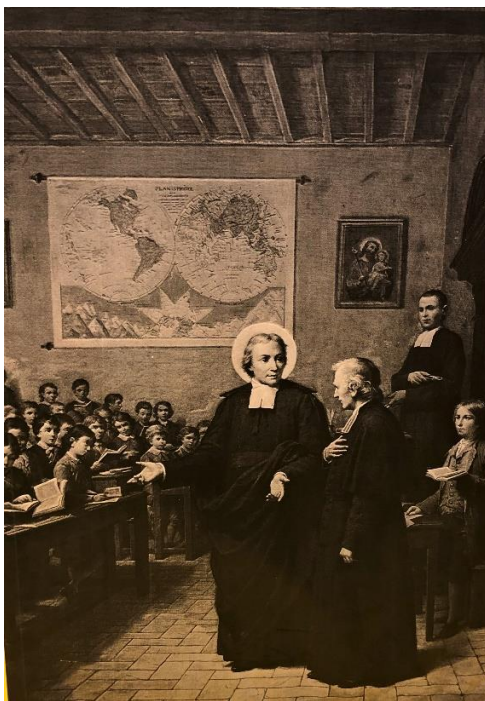
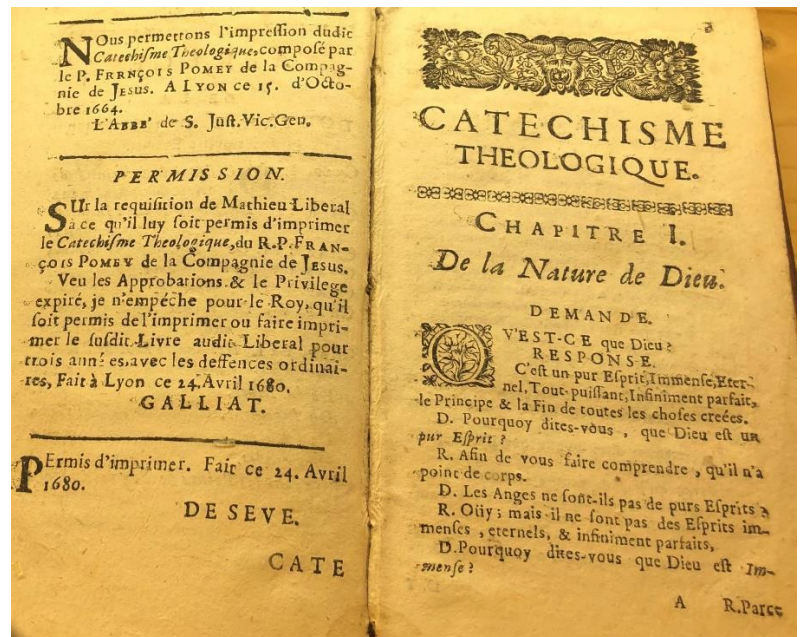
1. In the last decade, almost all our lecture notes (in the form of PowerPoint slides) have been delivered to students as PDF files via a university administered website. Now, some of us have chosen to add audio delivery of each lecture with the corresponding slides appearing at the appropriate times as an audio slide show. Students can access the slide show at any time and from any location as long as they can connect to the Internet. Students can email their questions to instructors. Instructors can either send the answers by emails or organize a group chat or Zoom session to answer questions.
2. Some instructors who prefer not to record their lectures can post only the lecture slides and deliver their usual lectures in Zoom sessions at the scheduled time slots.
3. For exams, large classes typically with >50 students will have online multiple-choice exams administered by the university; while smaller classes can have on-line exams with short answers or short essays. For closed book exams, the exam duration can be purposely set short to minimize the chance for students to look up information.
4. My department used to have student lab exercises involving live animals, or acutely isolated tissues and cells, in which each set of instruments must be shared by multiple students. Since the university requires students to maintain a separation of at least 2 meters, my Department is planning to replace the previous lab exercises with calculations and computer simulations for students to access remotely.
5. For the re-opening of our research labs, we are required to submit a plan describing measures such as minimizing the number of personnel at a time and maintaining a separation of at least 2 meters between workers. Our labs (with some areas shared with my wife's lab) have just got approval to re-open.
6. Paradoxically, because our offices are attached to the lab, we were told that we can only access those spaces briefly for retrieving papers and our laptop computers, but not for longer tasks (e.g. analysing data or writing). Therefore, we shall work mainly at home for a while.

With the current delivery of teaching in a mode akin to correspondence schools, we are unsure whether foreign students will still consider applying to come here in the immediate future.

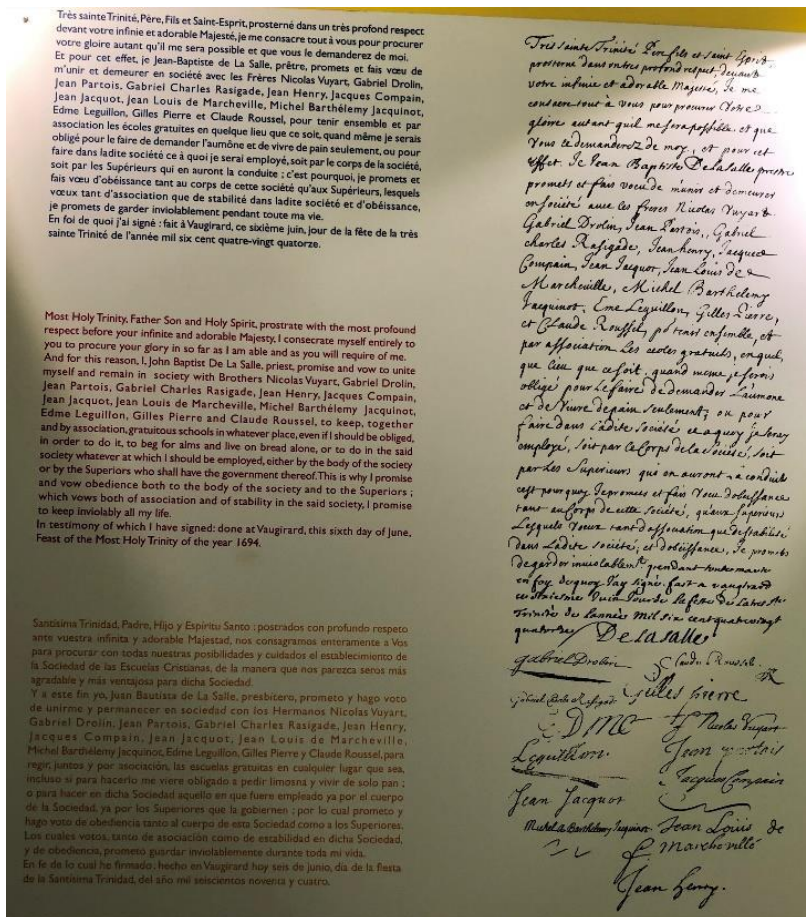
Pilgrimage to Reims, Birthplace of Saint John Baptist de La Salle (Part 2)

Anthony Luk (66)

The archive room hosts a collection of theology books and documents in bookshelves. Above the wooden paneled walls are portraits of spiritual leaders/educators of the clergy and of the poor. Visitors can look through the round glasses for the items placed inside the tables. These collected objects give the viewers some ideas of the livelihood in Reims more than three centuries ago. Examples are a candle that lit the dark in that period, games of dominoes and knuckle bones, a piece of wool referring to the textile industry in the region, and a copy of the vow of the Brothers that viewers can find the signature of De La Salle. The collection of teaching items include a catechism book of 1680, a page of alphabet, an abacus, pages and inkwell, the rules of the school and a bell used to signal the time of class periods.



Rows of yellow bench seats with a slanting plank extending from their back used as tables are arranged in the classroom matching the wall color. Ubiquitous tablets displaying a yellow screen are laid on the tables. Brother Bernard handed me a small wooden instrument that John Baptist had used to summon his classes into order by its clicking frequency. I gently touched the chair that Father John Baptist de La Salle used in Dijon in 1715 and dignified him by not sitting on the seat. Natural light shines brightly through the tall and large windows along the length of the classroom. For daydreaming, students can look outside at the pictures on the adjacent side yard — photographs of children in foreign lands under the tutelage of Lasallians.



In the living room, the wooden paneled walls, an old Bible and chair near the window, and a statue of Virgin Mary and Child Jesus from the 15th century next to the fireplace are contrasted by a set of computer screens and black ergonomic seats arranged on and behind a ringed desk. Brother Bernard elaborated that the circular design mimicked the manner of the Brothers having open and non-hierarchical discussions since the initial days of the congregation. This living room is appropriately called the foundation room as conferences have been held in the facility to further nurture and propagate the concepts of a human and Christian education originated by John Baptist de La Salle (to be continued).



Memorabilia

LA SALLE PRIMARY SCHOOL
Entrance Examination, 1962

Date: **- 5 JUN 1962**

Time: 上午 8.30 a.m. () 下午 2.30 p.m. ()
9.30 a.m. () 3.30 p.m. ()
10.30 a.m. (✓) 4.30 p.m. ()

Name: **TAVARES, JOSEPH ANTHONY**

No. **2138**

Receipt
Received Dollar
One only (\$1.00)
being Registration
Fee.
茲收到報名費
港幣壹元正
此據

N.B. List of successful applicants will be posted up near the
School Entrance on Sunday, 17th June, 1962.
注意: 收錄學生名單將於一九六二年六月十七日(星期日)在校公佈

JUN 1962

Headmaster.
24th April, 1962.

You never know what you may find in your closet, or basement.

Joey Tavares (73) was kind enough to share his memorabilia with us: his application form to enter LSPS in 1962, signed by Brother Henry. Joey's late father, David Eugenio Tavares (1929-2019) kept this form. Both Joey and his younger brother Christopher Anthony Tavares attended LSPS & LSC.

If you have any memorabilia to share with La Salle brothers, please let us know!

About this newsletter

This newsletter is aimed at providing an electronic platform for communication & sharing among La Salle old boys in North America. It is not meant to be used as an instrument for promoting any personal agenda.

The editorial board reserves the rights to oversee and edit all submissions, to ensure all contents shall meet our publication standards, as well as appropriate for the newsletter's intended audience & global circulation. Our editorial board has the exclusive right to reject submissions deemed to be not in line, or incompatible with the purpose or spirit of this newsletter at our sole discretion.

Previous issues of the newsletter are available from the archive located at <http://www.lscob-global.net/NALS.html>

If you want to communicate with the editorial board, please send email to editors@lscob-global.net

If you want to subscribe to this newsletter, please send email (with subject line: subscribe) to newsletter-lscob-global.net-subscribe@lscob-global.net

If you want to unsubscribe to this newsletter, please send email (with subject line: unsubscribe) to newsletter-lscob-global.net-unsubscribe@lscob-global.net

The Chief editors appreciate Jeffrey Ng (76), Danny Leung (71), Fred Tse (76), Anthony Luk (66) and Joey Tavares (73) for their contribution to this issue, and Jimmy Chang (66) for proofreading.

Chief Editors	John Jean (76) Victor Leung (77) Kevin Kwok (88) Chris Fong (94) Ambrose Lee (98)

