



The Serra Club of Saginaw, Michigan

The Saginaw Serran

Where Vocations are Fostered

Established June 20, 1951

Vol. 2, Issue 2, December 2005

A Message from Our President by Bill Ruger

This has been an eventful and difficult year for the world. With the many disasters that have happened, people of many faiths and nationalities have come together to assist those affected. This is truly answering Jesus' call to the challenges of his gospels. We who have had so many blessings bestowed on us throughout our lives must continue to give of our time, talents and treasures.

Our club is vibrant but there is so much more that we can do over the next year to better support the international goals. Our challenge should be to support our church's call for vocations, supporting our clergy and to increase our knowledge of our faith. These are in tune with the Serra club's constitution.

We have had some excellent programs over the

past year, added a few new members and attended the conventions to learn more about what other clubs are doing. We need to strengthen our commitment in accomplishing the objectives above and to participate in the club activities. We need more members willing to work on committees to develop proactive programs for the Saginaw Serra Club.

There is also the matter of election of officers in the near future. I encourage those of you that are willing to serve as a club officer to approach a current officer with your interest.

We are in the process of developing activities which could encourage new prospective members for our club. We will need the support of each of the club members to accomplish this when the plans are announced.

I would like to thank Kathy Myles for attending the Regional Convention and giving such a thorough report to our membership.

Have a Blessed and Holy New Year.



The Extra Electric Train: A Christmas Memory

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson

Though money didn't flow as freely as the rain that winter, my parents worked with joyful anticipation to give my brother and me a Christmas present we would never forget. They scrimped for months and then spent more than they could probably afford for a Marx electric train.

Then the day before Christmas, a cousin stationed at a nearby military base pulled into the driveway. Opening the trunk of his car he lifted out a large heavy box. My brother and I could hardly wait to see what it was. On Christmas morning we opened it first. Eagerly we unwrapped an expensive new electric train set. Wow! You had to pull us down off the ceiling. A Lionel train, too! Then we opened the presents from our parents--another electric train. Ho hum. And not nearly as extravagant as the one from our cousin. Guess whose we played with most?

Mom and Dad were hurt. The outlay for an unmarried Air Force lieutenant was nothing compared to the sacrifice my parents had made. But all we saw was the glamour of an expensive train. We counted our

parents' gift as merely a nice accessory.

Our heavenly Father spends many a disappointing Christmas. Amidst the glittering ornaments and flashing Christmas lights, the hurry and hustle of shopping and wrapping and family get-togethers, parties and presents, trees and turkeys--who really cares about His gift?

What gets more attention from us: our Father's gift of life in Jesus Christ or the quickly-wrapped department store gifts from our cousins?

Thank you, Father, for Jesus. Thank you for the abundant life that we, His disciples, can enjoy now. Thank you for sending us a most expensive gift--your own life. Thank you!

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SHARE SERRA...BRING A FRIEND!

The Season of Advent by Fr. Ron Dombrowski

The Season of Advent can be a very hectic time of year. So many things to do, so many people to visit.



But if we use the Season of Advent as it was meant to be used, it can be a very prayerful time in a hectic world.

The Season of Advent begins in the church calendar. We spend 28 days or so preparing for the Birth of the Lord. The word Advent comes from the Latin word Adventus which means "coming", the coming of the Lord.

During the Season of Advent we turn to the color of purple or a bluish purple. In the early days of the Church the advent Season was looked upon as a mini Lent. This season is not only meant for us to be used as a time to prepare for the coming of the Lord's Birth, but also to prepare ourselves for the Second Coming of the Lord and the end of time.

The four weeks of Advent can be the key as to how we celebrate the Christmas Season. We can prepare by: reading Sacred Scripture, spending time or more time in prayer, use the little "Blue Books", help those who are in need: We can use Traditional Customs to help us prepare for this wonderful season.

The Advent Wreath can be very simple or very elegant, 4 candles, one rose and three purple can be put into a styrofoam wreath or a wire wreath and surrounded with winter greens. The candles remind us of the Light of Christ, the greens remind us of life and the circle of the wreath remind us of eternity.

The Advent Calendar has 28 windows, one each for the 28 days of the Advent Season. We open up one of the windows of the calendar and inside each window is a scripture verse for the day, giving us the true meaning of the Advent Season.

The Paper Chain idea is a good idea for children or

grandchildren. Every time a child does a good deed a link of chain is made and then added together to the chain. This chain of good deeds can be collected by a child or a family. The chain can then be put on the Christmas Tree or around a door way.

The Creche can begin to be brought out during the Advent Season as we prepare for the Birth of the Lord and every day or a couple of days different figures can be added and then on Christmas Eve the last figures of Mary, Joseph and the Baby Jesus are added.

The Giving Tree or Angel Tree is one of the many ways that we have to help the needy or the less fortunate during the Advent Season. We take an angel or a tag or two from the Giving Tree, purchase the gift and then return it to our churches to be distributed to the less fortunate during this holy time of year.

The Christmas Tree is something that we all have in our homes. In many homes there are more than one tree. No matter how we decorate our trees, elegantly or with home or hand made ornaments, it is always the center of the season. We can transform the decorating of our tree as a sign of Thanksgiving for the blessings that God has given to each one of us.

Caroling is a favorite of many people. It is a time for all of us to sing whether we can sing well or not so well. During the Advent and Christmas Season we all join our voices together to announce the coming of the Lord as the Angels did on that first Christmas night. Music is a language that we all understand let us use it to praise the Lord.

No matter which one we choose of all of the customs we use to prepare for the coming of the Lord Advent can be a time of blessings to each and every one of us, a quiet time and a time of much rejoicing. All we have to do is convince ourselves that we need to make time for the Lord. May everyone have a joyous time preparing for the Lord and a Blessed Christmas.

Why I am a Serran by Jean Seman

When my brother, Bill Ruger, invited me to attend a Serra Club meeting I thought, "one more thing to add to my busy retirement schedule!" I had heard of then Serra Club from working at the Diocese and, I have to admit, part of me wanted to know more. So I jumped in and attended a meeting.

After a few months I became a member and shortly thereafter I was asked to take on the role of Vice President of Programs.

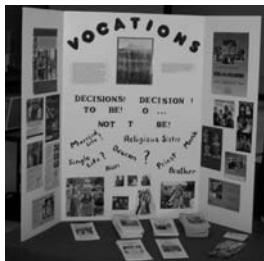
I was and still am impressed with Serra's dedication to the encouragement and support of vocations, especially vocations to the priesthood. I enjoy the camaraderie with others, the speakers we invite, our fine luncheons, and I especially enjoy praying the rosary before our regular meetings. I also enjoy celebrating the Mass with my fellow Serrans each quarter.

As program director, I pledge to continue to invite interesting and spiritual speakers to attend our meetings. I encourage anyone to offer program suggestions for future meetings.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

2005 Youth Rally, "Take, Eat and Live" by Kathy Bronz



Our club had a display on Vocations in the area called The Marketplace, where various organizations were present along with displays on the different Mission trips that youth from the diocese take part in. The teens came to this area to see the different ways that they could "live" out Eucharist in our world today. We handed out prayer cards, brochures on the various church vocations, book marks and had a raffle for a small tapestry of Jesus, "Come Follow Me". The winner was Jenna Rickerd from Chesaning.

Over 400 youth took part in the rally with over 600 youth and adults celebrating Liturgy together with Father Steve Gavit presiding. As a coordinator for religious education I am always encouraged to see the youth together and witness their love for life. Next to our table our seminarians, Denis, Rich and Nathan, came from Sacred Heart Seminary with a display and it was great to talk with them.

Club Launches Website by Ray Bartels

For many months now, since becoming V.P. of Communications for our club, I have had an urge to develop a website. Initially I thought the task would be too difficult and time consuming. I also believed that finding suitable content would be a problem.

As I began to investigate the process, I learned that it was not really that difficult. I looked at literally dozens of other Serra Club websites from around the country to get a general idea of how they were put together. I then began investigating various web hosting services and found that many offer the tools that even a novice like me could employ to create a credible website.

After a few hours of "fooling around" I managed to design and launch our very own website. The site can be found at www.saginawserraclub.org.

It contains tabs which are organized to provide information and answer questions like, "What is Serra, and what do they do?" Take a tour of the site and let me know what you think and, if you have suggestions for content, just let me know. We can add it!

Serra Newsletter Receives Award

The *Saginaw Serran*, a quarterly publication of the Saginaw, Michigan Serra Club, received The **Outstanding USAC Newsletter of Region 6 Award** at the Great Lakes Regional Convention held in Lima, OH on August 13. Region 6 is comprised of 31 clubs in Michigan, Ohio and West Virginia.

Looking for that special gift idea or unique Christmas card?

The Sisters of St. Clare have a great selection of unique gifts and Christmas cards along with cards for all -occasions. The selection can be viewed by visiting their website at:

www.rc.net/saginaw/srsclare/anointingoil.html, or by calling at 797-0593.

Also, Nouvel Catholic Central is sponsoring a wreath and pointsettia sale. Visit Nouvel's website at www.nouvel.org for details.

What is a Vocation?

A vocation is God's unique invitation, addressed to individual persons in which a free response is expected. This response is not a single act, but a life-long process, a journey of faith. Each of us is called to help make others aware of their personal richness, talents and human value, opening their eyes to the variety of lifestyles and then ministries within the Church.

MEMBER LIST

George Ayotte	684-3447
Edgar Balcueva	793-5692
Ray Bartels	790-1224
Dave Beyerlein	790-7328
Tom Bivens	752-8560
Jerry Breen	793-5337
Kathy Bronz	792-2890
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Fr. Ron Dombrowski	753-2497
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Stan Sobol	793-4720
Jerry Talbot	792-4130
Bob Vitu	799-1236
Sharon Wahl	799-2925
Marty Wilson	790-2727

Do you know someone who would like to know more about Serra? Call Bud at 989-792-5571, or email him at budcjrigh@aol.com

The USA Council of Serra International invites you to visit its website at www.serraus.org for up-to-date information on Serra and other great information.

The Saginaw Serran is published four times each year in March, June, September and December. Please submit articles at least two weeks prior to publishing date. For question or comments please contact Ray Bartels at 989-790-1224 or email at raybartels@charter.net.

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

December 6, 2005	Mass with Fr. Ron
December 20, 2005	Christmas Dinner - Watch for special mailing
January 3, 2006	Terri Grierson - The Mother Teresa Endowment Fund
January 17, 2006	Thomas J. Renna, Ph. D - Pope Benedict XVI
February 7, 2005	Fr. George Serour - Ecumenism
February 21, 2006	Mass with Fr. Ron
March 7, 2006	Pam Cole - The East Side Soup Kitchen
March 22, 2005	Bishop Robert J. Carlson and The Honorable Dennis Leiber, President of Serra International - The State of Serra

All meetings (except Board meetings) are held at the Center for Ministry. The Rosary will be said at 11:30 a.m. before all meetings.

Our Board of Trustees meets at 12:15 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month at the Office of Yeo and Yeo, CPA's, 3023 Davenport, Saginaw, MI.

2004/05 Officers and Trustees

Bill Ruger	President
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Fr. Ron Dombrowski	Chaplain

PRAYER LIST

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Fr. Gerald F. Kukla

Serra Mission

Our mission is to foster and affirm vocations to the ministerial priesthood and vowed religious life in the Saginaw Diocese and through this ministry enrich and develop our members' common Catholic faith.

The USA Council of Serra International invites you to visit its website at www.serraus.org for valuable and informative information about Serra International.

The Serra Club of Saginaw

The Center for Ministry
5802 Weiss Rd.
Saginaw, MI 48603
989-797-6607

***Make plans to attend our Annual
Christmas Dinner on December 20th
at The Swan Valley Banquet Center***



Biography of Blessed Junipero Serra...

In pursuit of his goals, Father Serra walked thousands of miles between San Diego and Monterey and even Mexico City. He traveled the seas, also; and by the time he died August 28, 1784, in Carmel he had founded nine missions, introduced agriculture and irrigation techniques, and the Spanish language. He had battled governors, bureaucrats and military commanders to secure a system of laws to protect the California Indians from at least some of the injustices inflicted by the Spanish soldiers whose practices often were in conflict with Father Serra's.

Father Serra had been a philosophy professor and distinguished preacher at the Convent of San Francisco in Mallorca, the Spanish island where he was born in 1713. He was 36 years old when he reached the port of Vera Cruz, Mexico, on December 8, 1749, and walked to Mexico City. (It was during that journey of 24 days that an insect bite caused the sore on his leg that sometimes became so painful he had difficulty walking.) He spent 17 years in missionary work in the Sierra Gorda in the present area of North-Central Mexico. In 1767 he became president of the 14 missions in Baja California, originally founded by the Jesuits, then turned over to the Franciscans.

At that time, faced with the threat of Russian colonization from the north, Spain had committed itself to pushing northward into what is now the American state of California. Russian America (Alaska) was only 800 miles away. Spain feared that Russia would push south and gain a firm foothold in Alta California. The Spanish military launched an expedition into California in 1769 under the leadership of Gaspar de Portola. Father Serra set out with them to establish missions.

Serra's blessing of the site of Mission San Diego de Alcalá on July 16, 1769, marked the beginning of the European settlement of California.

Between the years of 1796 and 1784, Father Serra made six voyages by sea totaling 5,400 miles. He traveled by land the distance between Monterey and San Francisco eight times, Monterey and San Antonio 11 times, His longest journey by land was from Monterey to Mexico City. In total, he traveled well over 5,500 miles by land.

Father Serra arrived at Monterey aboard the sailing ship San Antonio on June 1, 1770. He celebrated the first Mass on June 3, 1770, on the shore of Monterey Bay, where we now find the city of Monterey.

He returned to San Diego to work on the mission there, then founded Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1776, the year of the American Declaration of Independence.

When Father Serra died in 1784 he had established nine California missions and baptized 6,000 Indians, about 10 percent of the California Native American population. Those nine missions grew to 21. Today, more than 60 percent of the state's nearly 26 million people live in areas surrounding the missions, and El Camino Real, the road that Father Serra traveled on a tour of the missions shortly before this death, established a major artery running much of the length of the state.

"Siempre adelante, nunca retroceder"