

# McSherry remembered for her faith

By BLAIR AMES

News-Post Staff

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Marian Shriver McSherry is being remembered as a woman of great faith.

"She treated people very graciously. She could see what she was doing for others she was doing for Christ," said the Rev. Dick Murphy of St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church, where McSherry was a member.

McSherry, 85, died Sunday in her home on Second Street in Frederick.

Murphy, pastor of the church for the past five years, said he would remember McSherry for her strong faith, as she attended Mass daily.

"She was very prayerful,

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She treated people very graciously. **SHE COULD SEE WHAT SHE WAS DOING FOR OTHERS** she was doing for Christ.

THE REV. DICK MURPHY  
St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church

very, very dedicated to coming to the Eucharist and encouraging others to come," he said.

McSherry's devotion to her faith went beyond attending Mass.

For at least the past 18 years, she would take communion and a bulletin to those members who

weren't able to attend Mass and pray with them. When his mother began living at Homewood Retirement Center, McSherry volunteered to take his mother communion as well, Murphy said.

"She was always looking for where the parish could be better and would jump in and help it be better," he said.

Deacon Mike Jones knew McSherry for more than 50 years; he grew up attending St. John's.

"Her source of energy was her faith," he said. "She was so tuned in to the Lord and what he wanted of her, so she just gave it everything she had," he said.

Jones said it will be noticeable that she is not attending

(See FAITH A-6)



Marian Shriver McSherry



Courtesy photo

## Historical Society awards

The Historical Society of Frederick County, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to preserving history and sharing that history with individuals of all ages and backgrounds, recently presented awards for its annual student contests. Shown are essay contest winners, from left, Catherine Kasica, top six; Trey Boothe, honorable mention; Marilyn Fisher, top six; Timmy DeMember, honorable mention; Annika LaRoche, top six; Elizabeth Hepburn, top six; John Fisher, top six; and Haley Frazier, top six. Not pictured are Ariana Bennett, Daniel Cleaver and Hayden Klemanski, all honorable mention.

# Faith

(Continued from A-5)

church daily, but everyone recognizes that she's in for a great reward.

"She was the kind of person you could rely on for a lot of things," he said.

Amy Keating, a neighbor on Second Street and fellow parishioner, knew McSherry for 20 years.

"She was an outstanding role model, as a mother, as a woman and as a Catholic," she said. "It's a great loss to the community. We considered her and her family as pillars (in the church)."

In 1960, McSherry was named Catholic Mother of the Year.

Her husband of 59 years, James, died in 2004. They married in 1946 and moved to Frederick two years later.

She and her husband received the 1982 Cornerstone Award for Catholic Education. Their efforts to aid Catholic education are still felt today at St. John Regional Catholic School and Mount St. Mary's University.

The James and Marian McSherry Scholarship Fund at St. John was started in 1997 in honor of their 50th wed-

ding anniversary.

Since then, the scholarship has aided at least one student a year to fund their education, said Karen Smith, principal of St. John Regional Catholic School.

McSherry was also instrumental in the school's capital campaign project to fund its move from Second Street to Opossumtown Pike in 2006. The move has allowed St. John to grow from about 200 students to its current enrollment of 589, said Sheila Evers, marketing and development director at St. John.

McSherry commissioned the statue of St. John, which was dedicated in October 2007, to be placed on school grounds.

"It's really nice to have that connection which brings us back to our roots on Second Street," Smith said. "She was a generous benefactor for our school."

The St. John's Catholic Prep gymnasium carries the McSherry name.

"The McSherrys were very precious to our school," said Diane Favret, the school's executive director of institutional advancement. "Jim McSherry and three other gentlemen — Dewey Jordan, Bernie Grove and Leo Rocca —

kept the school afloat in some very trying times."

At Mount St. Mary's University, the McSherrys established the McSherry Family Scholarship and were charter members on the rector's council. The McSherry name at the Mount as students and benefactors dates back to the 19th century, Monsignor Steven Rohlfis said.

"She and James' legacy was one of deep concern for future priests in the United States and through their efforts and generosity helped that to continue on through the late 20th century and into the 21st century," he said.

The McSherrys also established a scholarship fund at St. Ignatius Loyola Academy in Baltimore.

McSherry is survived by her 12 children, 30 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren, along with her siblings, Clinton K. and Mary Eleanor Macsherry, John H. and Frances Macsherry, Charles O'D. and Louise Macsherry and Emily and Ed Belt.

A memorial Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Friday at St. John the Evangelist Roman Catholic Church. Burial will follow at St. John's Cemetery in Frederick.



The St. John Regional Catholic School STEM Fair was held Saturday at Mount St. Mary's University. Colleen Morgan explains her Plant Growth Simulations project to judge Mike Currens, an administrator at the National Cancer Institute-Frederick. One hundred and four students from pre-K through eighth grade participated.

*Staff photo by Sam Yu*

# Frederick senior keeps on the move

BY ELIZABETH SKALSKI  
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## STUDENT-ATHLETE

**FREDERICK** - Abigail Tighe has been playing soccer and softball since before she could read, but scoring goals and home runs wasn't what excited her.

"Running was the best part," said Tighe, a senior at St. John's Catholic Prep. "I love it."

Tighe, 18, captains the Frederick school's softball team, having played shortstop for four years. She played on the Vikings' soccer team her freshman and sophomore years, and has run cross



TOM MCCARTHY JR./CR STAFF

Shortstop Abigail Tighe, a senior at St. John's Catholic Prep in Frederick, fields a throw to second base during a game against Garrison Forest School March 29.

ball team and spent most weekends year-round playing up and down the East Coast.

The oldest of three sisters, Tighe said her parents give her "enough of a nudge" to try something new and then let her decide whether or not she likes it.

"It was my choice to switch over to running," Tighe said. "My parents encouraged me to do whatever (sport I wanted)."

An A-plus student who has taken six Advanced Placement courses, Tighe has been accepted to Notre Dame, Penn State, Purdue, Iowa State and McDaniel College. She plans to run track and cross country in college and major in aeronautical engineering.

Tighe is a member of the National Honor Society, a student ambassador and participates in campus ministry. She was vice president of the Student Government Association as a freshman and sophomore.

A parishioner of Holy Family Catholic Community, Middletown, Tighe has served as an altar server, lector, member of the choir and the parish's landscape committee.

A valuable lesson Tighe said she has learned from John Herr, the school's track and field and cross country coach, is to try her best and take away something positive from every race.

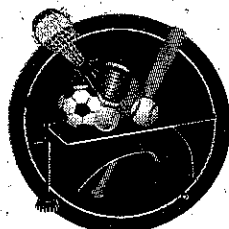
"It's about doing the best you can," Tighe said, "and not always comparing yourself. A lot of the time, that's enough to beat other people."

Tighe has applied that lesson to her schoolwork.

"With ACT and SAT scores I tried not to stress too much," Tighe said. "I don't care how everyone else scored and if I didn't get into a college, it's because it wasn't the right fit. It helps keep things in perspective." \*

## ABIGAIL TIGHE

St. John's  
Catholic Prep  
Senior



### CREDENTIALS:

Altar server,  
lector, former  
choir member and member of the  
landscape committee at Holy Family  
Catholic Community, Middletown;  
4.28 GPA; campus minister and  
student ambassador; middle-distance  
running and softball standout

country and track since.

"I'm not a sprinter," Tighe said. "I love the long, drawn-out races. You get the runner's high and you just keep going. It's a Zen thing."

Last October, Tighe was the B Conference runner-up at the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland cross country championships, covering 5K in 20 minutes, 36 seconds. In February, at the IAAM indoor track championships, she lowered the school record for 3,200 meters to 12:38.

"That was the best thing," Tighe said. "I don't know what else."

# Math camp adds up for county students

■ Retired teacher brings unique teaching style to summer program

BY MARGARITA RAYCHEVA  
STAFF WRITER

Not many teachers can get students to focus on math during summer, but Nick Diaz doesn't have that problem.

Thanks to his enthusiasm, energy and sense of humor, the weeklong summer program at the Learning Institute for Enrichment (LIFE) and Discovery feels much more like a fun game or a competition than a dry math program.

There are no tedious calculations or unimaginative division or multiplication problems. Instead, Diaz's students have fun with math and look at it as a brain puzzle that can be solved with logic and by breaking down large numbers into manageable pieces.

For example, any of the 15 students who was in Diaz's Math Wonders class on Tuesday knows how to determine if a number — regardless of how large it is — is a multiple 3, 4 or 5.

If the number ends in 5 or 0, it is a multiple of five.

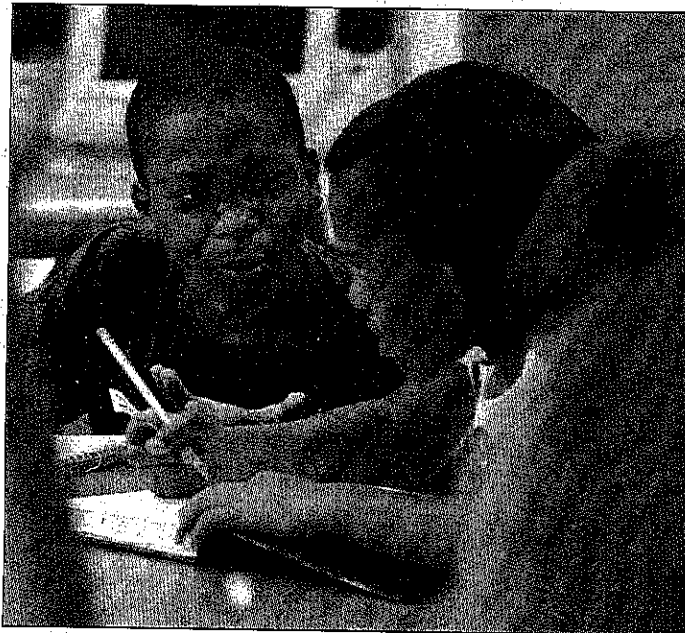
If the sum of a number's digit can be divided by three (as in 6,780), then it is a multiple of three.

If the last two digits of a number can be divided by four, (as in 3,524 or 56,736), then the entire number can be divided by four.

In his endless arsenal of math and tricks, Diaz has similar rules for numbers that are multiples of 2, 7 and 11, and he uses them to show students that they don't always have to break out calculators or pens and paper to be good in math.

"If you know this, you can outsmart the calculator; you can outpace the calculator," Diaz told his 15 students on Tuesday.

This is the entire philosophy behind Diaz's summer math camp, which is taking



PHOTOS BY TOM FEDOR/THE GAZETTE

Devin Barge, 11, of Frederick discusses a problem with his sister Haley, 11, during Tuesday's morning session of the Learning Institute for Enrichment (LIFE) and Discovery math camp held at Grace Community Church in Frederick.

through seven.

It provides math enrichment for Frederick County students who are interested in math, said Stacy McGiffin, a Myersville parent who volunteers with the program. McGiffin's son Brian, a rising fifth-grader at Myersville Elementary also attends the program this year.

"It is really not remedial at all," McGiffin said. "Most of it is stuff they are not learning at school."

The material they are covering is challenging and includes topics that are often not covered until Algebra 2, McGiffin said. Ultimately, the tactics they learn in the class can give students an edge for middle school or help prepare them for challenging math competitions, such as Math Counts. The strategies and tricks are also helpful for any student shooting for a high score on their SATs.

Though the program has existed since 2004, it has been gaining more popularity among students. The LIFE and

15 beginners and 10 advanced students taking advantage of the program, she said.

Among other subjects, the program covers prime numbers, squares and square roots, fractions, decimals and probability. But it is really Diaz's reputation, distinct teaching style, and personality that are the major draw to the program.

"He is really casual," said Michael Hepburn, 11, a rising seventh-grader at St. John's Catholic Preparatory, who is taking the math camp for a second year this summer.

"He knows all the shortcuts, which really helps in academic competitions," he added.

Diaz, a Middletown resident since 1975, has 40 years of experience as educator, has taught math in various schools and capacities.

Before he retired from Frederick County Public

Schools in 2004, he spent 30 years teaching at Waverley Elementary and then Gov. Thomas Johnson Middle School. He also coached the Math Counts competition team at the middle school from 1986-2003. Diaz, who also serves on the Frederick Community College Board of Trustees, has also taught math at St. John's Regional Catholic School and at the Barnesville School.

"The stuff that I know is very different than the (school system) curriculum," Diaz said. "I know what these guys need."

All that helped Diaz develop his distinct, conversational approach to classroom education, in which he chats with students, makes jokes, and is just as capable of teaching them to think outside the box as making them laugh.

For parents, like Marlene Barge, that was the main reason to sign her children up for Diaz's class.

"Most children look at math as a challenging subject," said Barge, whose two rising sixth-graders at New Market Middle School are in Diaz's class now. "I wanted them to look at it a little more lightly."

Janice Hepburn, who also has two children in the program now agreed.

"I like his approach with looking at problem solving in a different way," said Hepburn, whose children go to St. John's Regional Catholic School. "They both come out excited. It gives them a different perspective."



# Handwriting

## Still a Skill for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

By Karen Smith

The three Rs (Reading, wRiting and aRithmetic) have been the foundations of a basic education program within schools for many years. But with today's onslaught of technological aides, there are some who might argue that these are now a thing of the past. They might argue that we can use calculators to do anything from simple calculations to more sophisticated algorithms. Or that we can listen to books on tape so one might question the necessity for learning how to read. Or the fact that we can replace handwriting by implementing the use of a computer keyboard.

In a recent poll taken by Learning and Leading with Technology, educators were asked to comment on the question: Is Cursive Writing Worth Teaching? 71% of the respondents to the poll answered, "Yes!" Only 29% responded, "No!" An analysis of the question written by the director of education at the National Archives stated that "Learning cursive is a practical communication skill that will enable students to convey their ideas, and make sense of those penned by others in the past, present, and future."

Today, there are some schools that spend little time on teaching students the art of cursive writing. However, recent research shows that writing by hand actually engages our brain in


the learning process and that there is a connection between cursive writing and brain development.

According to a study done by Sloan and McGinnis, "Even in this age of word processors, the quality of children's handwriting can have a profound impact upon their learning and the acceptance of their ideas. Increasingly, standardized tests include a written essay that is holistically scored by trained raters. There is evidence that the quality of handwriting significantly skews the evaluation of these essays."

According to Rand Nelson of Peterson Directed Handwriting, "The act of physically gripping a pen or pencil and practicing the swirls, curls and connections of cursive handwriting activates parts of the brain that lead to increased language fluency." A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* reported that "researchers are finding that writing by hand is more than

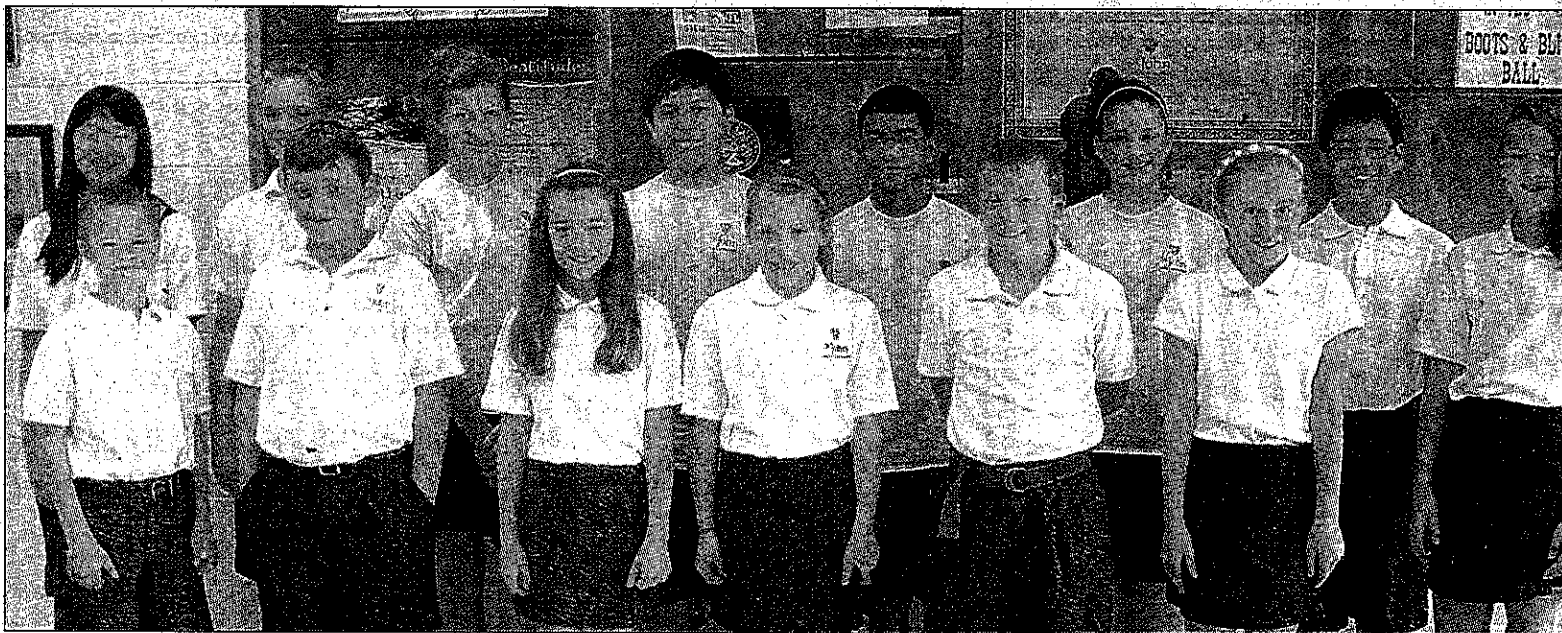
just a way to communicate."

Parents should not look at time spent on teaching handwriting during the school day as time wasted. Instead, they should embrace the idea that when students write by hand they are really engaging their brain in what they are learning. Zaner-Bloser, the nation's leader in research-based handwriting instruction, says that "handwriting is crucial for literacy." Handwriting taps into kinesthetic learning which is our first and strongest memory system.

Handwriting without Tears, a program for young students, also states that "research supports the active teaching of handwriting since it has been shown that writing by hand improves creative writing skills and fine motor skills." 

*Karen Smith is the principal at St. John Regional Catholic School in Frederick.*

## COMMUNITY NEWS



Courtesy of

### Education contest winners from St. John Regional

Winners of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas Education Contest from St. John Regional Catholic School were recently announced. Students won division one, fourth and fifth grade, and division two, middle school. From left, front row are Brady Gerst, division one, second prize in art; Adam Hay, division one, first prize in art; Sarah Grace McElwain, division two, first prize in essay; Sydney Willis, division one, first prize in essay; Matthew Wilk, division two, third prize in art; Isabelle Clark, division one, second prize in essay; Emma St. Croix, division one, third prize in essay. Back row are Liam Heupel, division two, first prize in computer art; Kyle Bryant, division two, second prize in essay; Rachel St. Croix, division two, second prize in computer art; Nicholas Thomason, division two, first prize in poetry; Tom Thomas, division two, second prize in art; Jamie Stitz, division two, first prize in art; Thor Nishimoto, division two, third prize in poetry.

# Teachers' program 'like family'

## Partnership benefits local Catholic schools

COURTNEY POMEROY

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This is the true story of four teachers, picked to live in a house together in Frederick County Catholic schools and find out what happens when undergraduate courses are over and the mission for a master's degree begins.

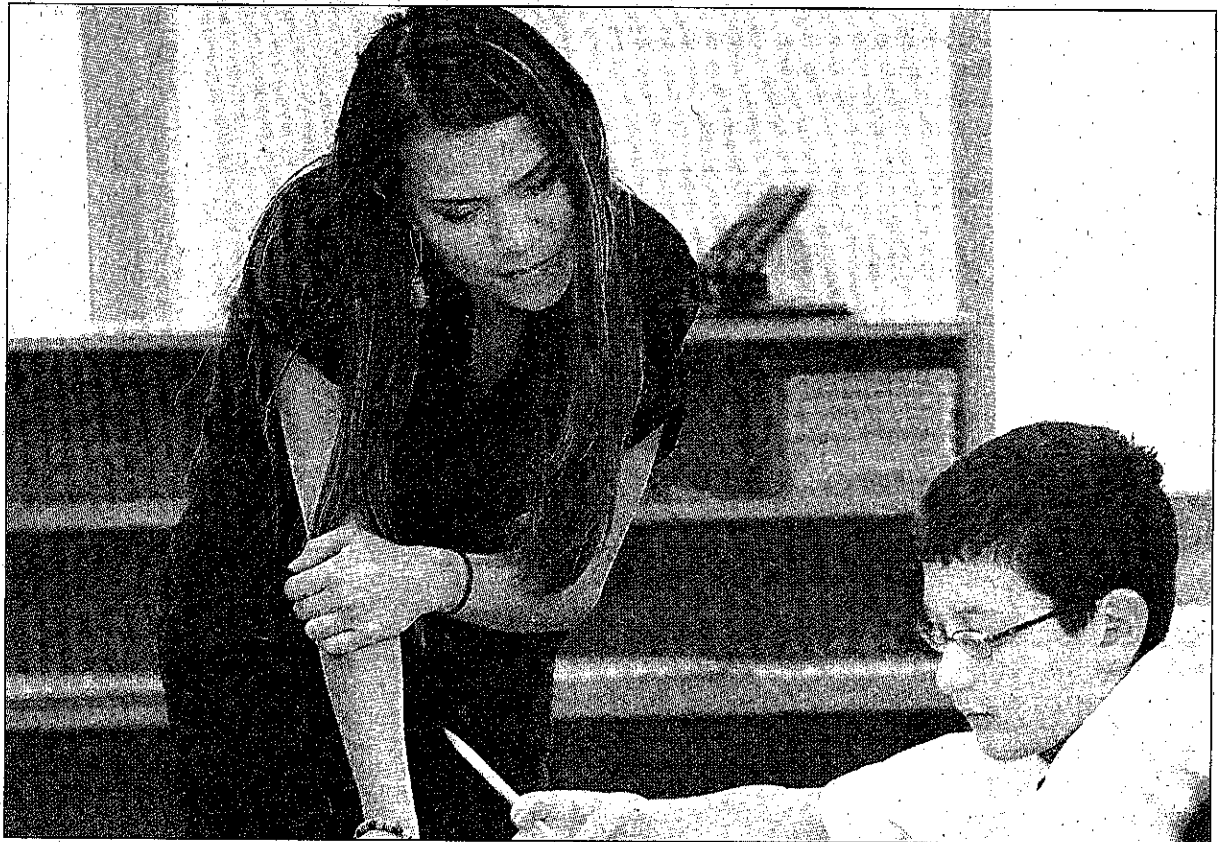
No, it's not a knockoff of MTV's reality show "The Real World." It's a program based at Notre Dame of Maryland University called Operation TEACH.

The program, in its 11th year, places students seeking advanced degrees and teaching experience in Baltimore-area Catholic schools. TEACH stands for "Teachers Enlist to Advance Catholic Heritage." In exchange for a commitment of two years at the university, the participants earn their master's degrees at Notre Dame. All costs associated with their education are covered. The program also provides them with stipends and housing, which they share with other teachers who live in the area.

According to Sharon Derr, the program director, 22 participants are placed in 17 Catholic schools throughout the Baltimore region. Enough two teachers served in Frederick County schools last year; they commuted to the area in Baltimore. This year, four teachers who work in the county and two who work in Hagerstown live in a Frederick house together. "I love the community aspect of it," said Caitlin Smith, 23, who is adding her time in the program while teaching at Visitation Academy in Frederick.

"It's so wonderful because [my roommates] completely understand the pressures of teaching and managing my course work." Family Strobel, 22, is another program participant who works at Visitation Academy.

If we're all stressing out about



Staff photo by Adam Fried

Christina Printz works with sixth-graders at St. John Regional Catholic School.

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**I LOVE THE COMMUNITY ASPECT OF IT.** It's so wonderful because [my roommates] completely understand the pressures of teaching and managing my course work.

**CAITLIN SMITH, 23, an**  
Operation TEACH participant

school it becomes kind of a stressful environment," she said. "But the support is great."

Strobel said she also appreciates being able to live in the community where she teaches, which is a highlight of the program.

Tony Pawlicki, a 23-year-old teaching at St. John's Catholic Prep, agreed.

"I really like Frederick," he said. A native of a small Indiana town, Pawlicki thinks Notre Dame's Baltimore setting is nice, "but this is more my pace," he said. "It feels a little bit more like home."

Administrators in the schools

where the Operation TEACH participants work said the program provides a win-win situation.

"It's a great program because it allows novice teachers, who have no experience, to receive hands-on experience while at the same time studying education through the university," St. John's Catholic Prep Principal Marc Minsker wrote in an email.

"Typically, teachers with little to no experience have a difficult time finding full-time teaching gigs, but through the program they are placed at participating schools that end up saving money by hiring Operation

TEACH students and splitting the costs with the program."

Christina Printz, a 23-year-old teacher at St. John Regional Catholic School, agreed that the program has benefits for all involved.

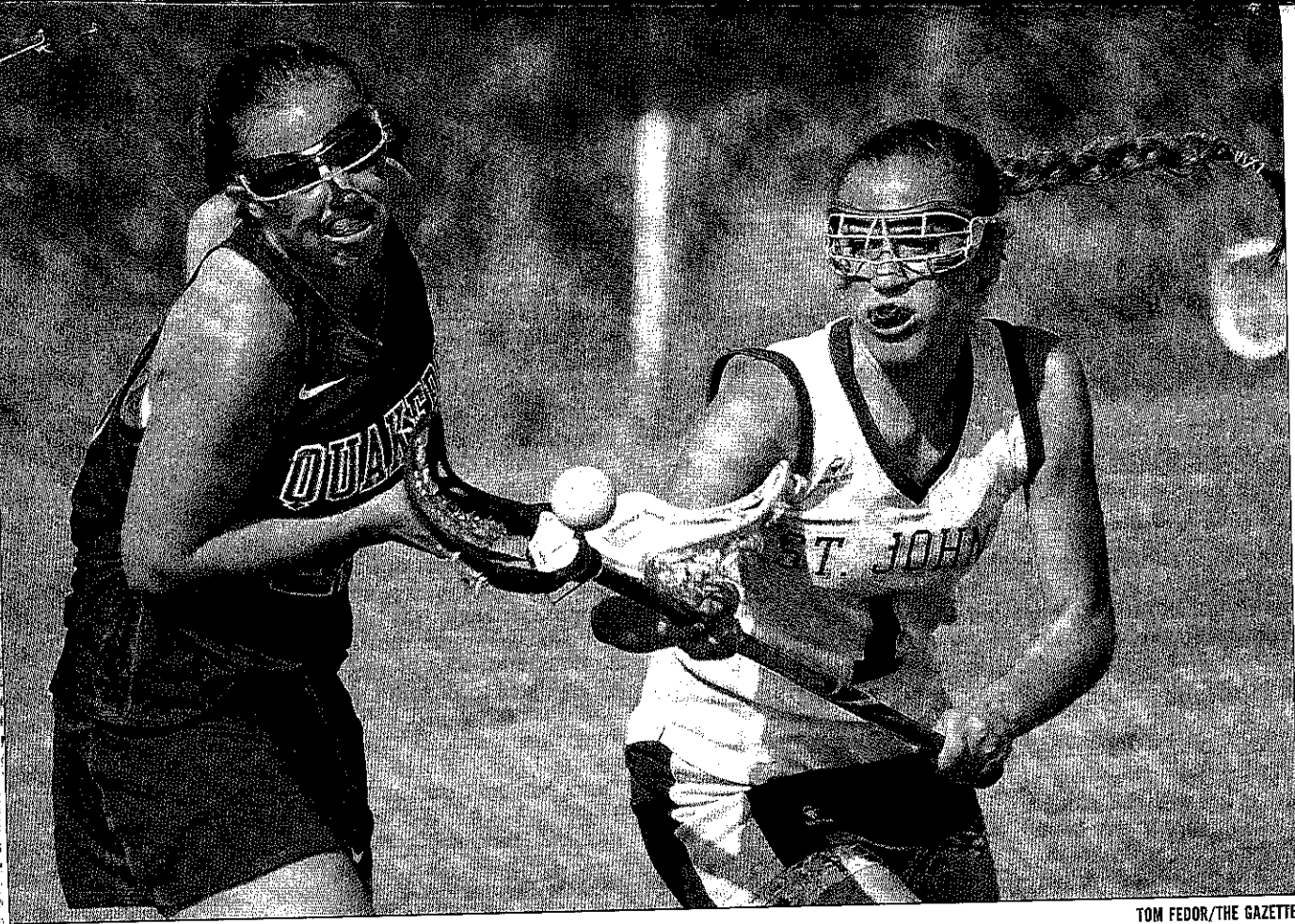
"The school has a candidate pool full of teachers who definitely want to be there," she said. Program hopefuls would not go through the rigorous process of applying and oftentimes move from elsewhere in the country to teach in the area if they didn't really cherish the opportunity, she said.

In exchange for their energetic attitudes toward Catholic education, the participants get cheap advanced schooling, a chance at firsthand teaching experience and, above all, a sense of community based around faith, she said.

She and her roommates support one another in small ways on a daily basis, but they also set aside times during the week to attend Mass, eat meals and pray together.

"It's kind of nice having a little family that understands you," she said.





TOM FEDOR/THE GAZETTE

St. John's Catholic Prep's Beth Ann Pierce (right) takes control from Friends School's Ella Cooper during Monday's lacrosse game in Frederick.  
*SJCS class of 2010*

# Sisters lead St. John's Catholic Prep

■ Three-sport athletes excel in each, but say they favor their spring sport

BY KENT ZAKOUR  
 STAFF WRITER

*SJCS  
 class of  
 2007*  
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Prior to every school day, senior Marial Pierce and her younger sister, sophomore Beth Ann, drive from Middleburg, Va., to school at St. John's Catholic Prep in Frederick.

The journey, 43.1 miles according to Google Maps, can be tiring and filled with traffic, but the sisters say it is well worth it. They are standout three-sport athletes for the Vikings' girls soccer, basketball and lacrosse teams.

"We used to live like 20 minutes away from St. John's in Knoxville," Marial said. "Now, it's like 45 or 60 and a little more annoying, but we are used to it. It is so worth it though because we've been going to [Catholic schools] our whole life. I couldn't ever imagine going anywhere else."

Added Beth Ann: "Changing to a school closer to home never entered our minds. St. John's is home."

Once classes are complete for the day at the intimate 275-student Catholic school,

the Pierce sisters rarely drive straight back home. Usually, they stay after school for a practice or game. In the fall, Marial, a forward, and Beth Ann, a goalie, each start for the varsity soccer team. Marial broke the school's all-time goal-scoring mark of 53 last fall. During the winter, both are key players for the Vikings basketball team.

But it is the spring lacrosse season they looked forward to most.

From the midfield last year, Marial recorded a remarkable 106 goals and 16 assists while Beth Ann accounted for 42 goals and 12 assists. This season, the Vikings (7-4 as of Tuesday) are in the midst of competing for the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland's B conference championship.

"We've always been athletic, but we both just really love lacrosse," Beth Ann said. "It's really fast paced, but I don't know exactly why. It's just one of those things where you like something better. ... It's good to have off-time with our other sports, but lacrosse is just so cool."

Coach Lucy Pompa said she is glad to have the duo on "her side."

"Each of them brings something different to the game. Beth Ann has a great first step and Marial is more of a catch and run

player," Pompa said. "But they are both tremendous lacrosse players that feed off of each other and fantastic teammates."

Marial, who is signed to play lacrosse at Monmouth University, first picked up a lacrosse stick in sixth grade following a tenure as a club soccer player. After stints on middle school and recreational teams, she joined the Frederick Starz Lacrosse Club (FS Lax) for three years.

"My brother started playing and I wanted to try," she said. "I just really got into it."

Beth Ann, meanwhile, was a dancer before following in her older sister's foot steps. Last summer, she played for the Virginia-based Capital Lacrosse 2014 Orange squad.

"We never played together — other than throwing the ball around in the yard — until Beth Ann got to high school last year," Marial said. "I didn't realize how big of a contributor she could be [as a freshman with older girls]. But she was a amazing. ... I know I can yell at her and there is not going to be any hard feelings because we are sisters."

"We know what we can do and look for each other," Beth Ann said. "There is just an extra and natural comfort level there for everything we do."