

“That the club is an indispensable factor in any successful program is axiomatic in alumni and alumnae circles. Its function is second only to that of the alumnae magazine as a liaison between the college and its former students.” -Family Portraits by Marion McCandless

Club Communications

There are many different means of communication you can use to promote your club and club events: invitations, postcards, newsletter, blast e-mail messages, club Web pages, social networking sites, plus alumnae directories. In this section, you will find tips and guidelines to help you with your communications. Please remember that the Alumnae Office is always ready to assist you—with designing the format, helping with printing and mailing, and any questions you may have. Don’t be afraid to ask!

ELECTRONIC PUBLICATIONS—CLUB WEB PAGES, SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND BLAST E-MAILS

As more and more alumnae from every generation get connected to the internet and cyber communication, clubs now have another choice in how they communicate with alumnae. The great news is that electronic communication is low cost and low maintenance for the clubs!

CLUB WEB PAGES:

The list of alumnae club leaders and area contacts can be found on the College’s web site at <http://www3.saintmarys.edu/alumnae-clubs>. If your club or area does not have a web page with the College then you can contact the assistant director of alumnae relations to formally request a page. The marketing communication department will create your page. The club should send all information to be posted to the page to the assistant director of alumnae relations. Plan for the information to be posted within one week of receipt.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

The popularity of Facebook is reaching far beyond the original intended audience of teenagers in college. Older users are joining the ranks of Facebook in droves and it’s becoming more and more important to have a presence in this particular form of communication. If your club decides to create a presence on Facebook, we strongly urge you to create a Facebook page instead of a group or a person. A fan page will give you the opportunity to have your updated postings sent directly to your fans’ news feed, making your news top of mind. If your club is a group, the alumnae must actively return back to the group to see updates. Remember—you must go to them!

The standard title of your fan page should be the name of your club after “Saint Mary’s College.” For instance:

Saint Mary’s College Houston Alumnae Club

NOT

Houston Alumnae Club of Saint Mary’s College
Houston Saint Mary’s College Alumnae Club

BLAST E-MAILS

To have a blast e-mail sent to alumnae in your area, please fill out the request form found on the Saint Mary’s website. If the e-mail is advertising an upcoming event, please send it at least two weeks prior to the event.

The alumnae office can send messages to the entire club or to certain class year (i.e. for a young alum event.)

Remember:

- Message must be pre-formatted. The alumnae office will not draft an e-mail for you.
- The College cannot blast out e-mail with attachments. Invitations and announcements must be formatted within the text of the e-mail.
- Think proactively: we don't wish to crowd people's inboxes. If you have several events in a short amount of time, announce them in one blast e-mail.

INVITATIONS

There are several invitation formats to choose from: postcard, colored or decorative paper, or a standard folded invitation. When deciding which format to use, think about which one best fits the type of event you are planning. For example, if you are planning a student send-off picnic, a more casual invitation could be used. If it is Founders' Day Mass and luncheon with a guest speaker, the occasion calls for a more formal invitation.

The Alumnae Office can assist with basic design, formatting, printing and mailing your invitations. In fact, having your invitation printed on campus is usually far less costly than a local printer. See the online form on the Saint Mary's website to request College printing and/or mailing. Further information on stylistic guidelines, Saint Mary's logos, and mailing guidelines are found later in this section.

When compiling information for the invitation, don't forget to include:

- What is the event
- Date and time
- Location and address
- Who to contact for more information
- Cost per person
- Reply date
- Who to make reservation checks payable to
- Tax deductible information if the event is a fund raiser

- Who is receiving the replies (and their address)

SEE APPENDIX FOR SAMPLE INVITATIONS

NEWSLETTERS

Communication is the chief tool for keeping your alumnae interested. The newsletter, as a vehicle for accomplishing this end, is irreplaceable. In it you can advertise the coming events and publicize as much of your club's future events as you are able. If your members reserve the dates of club events early on in the club's year, you will have a far greater attendance at events. Also use the newsletter for welcoming new members to the club, e.g., those new to your area and recent graduates, giving address and telephone changes, saying goodbye to those members who are moving out of the club area, congratulating recently-married alumnae as well as new mothers, etc. All of this promotes a cohesive and caring community.

Use the newsletter to give names of new students, to welcome their parents to the Saint Mary's family (if your policy is to include parents on your mailing list), and to tell of any notable achievements of the alumnae or students. Reading your Courier will provide you with a great deal of information about what is happening at Saint Mary's to add to your newsletter.

With the ever-increasing cost of postage, many clubs are choosing to mail only the beginning-of-the-year newsletter to all alumnae. The remaining issues become a benefit to dues-paying members. However, it is important to reestablish contact with all your members at least once a year. You will never interest others if you do not keep them informed or encourage them to attend an event.

To help keep your costs low consider having the College print and mail your newsletter. The online request form is on the Saint Mary's website.

TIPS for Producing An Effective Club Newsletter

1. KNOW YOUR MEMBERS' TALENTS

A good deal of work is involved, but many alumnae today have expertise in designing and producing newsletters professionally or are natural "computer buffs" and would willingly take on the task of producing your club newsletter. Offer your support in supplying the copy and other ideas for the newsletter structure.

2. GET ORGANIZED.

- Set a production schedule and publish on a regular basis. How often your club needs to publish depends on your calendar of events and the amount of news you circulate. Even if you must deviate from the schedule, having one will help maintain a regular flow of information to your members. Alumnae will begin to watch for the newsletter if it comes regularly.
- Plan enough time to do a good job. After the first issue, you can gauge about how much time is needed for production, printing and mailing.
- Research production costs and services. With the right computer buff as your editor, you can have a great looking newsletter whether you use a copy machine or quick-print shop. Perhaps you know an alumna or an alumna's spouse who would be able to donate printing services through their workplace. The Alumnae Office will also accept camera ready copy for printing in the Saint Mary's print shop.
- Keep records and a file for feedback on expenses, evaluation, upgrading and improving.

3. GATHER INFORMATION SOURCES.

- Let your membership know they may call on you with information appropriate for the newsletter. Offer space for alumnae advertising or announcements.
- Try a "guest column," or invite one of your area Saint Mary's students to submit campus news from the student perspective.
- Information packets from the Alumnae Office are also sources of important and timely information about what's going on at Saint

Mary's.

- Know in advance what events are coming up. It's better to mention events early rather than at the last minute.

4. PLAN A BUDGET FOR YOUR NEWSLETTER.

What kind of newsletter does your club need? How often? Once a year; semi-annually; quarterly? What will your budget allow? Your first (or only) newsletter each year should be mailed to all the alumnae in your club area. Continuation of newsletters to all alumnae helps to reinforce your club's visibility and activity level, but due to postage costs, it may be necessary to limit future issues to dues-paying members only. Be sure to include a dues form in your first issue and let your readers know that newsletters go regularly only to dues-paid members.

Don't forget your members who move into the area during the course of the club year. A little extra recruitment effort in the form of putting them on your active mailing list for the first year, regardless of their dues paying status, may reap big benefits later on when these new members become active participants in your club.

5. CHOOSE AN ATTRACTIVE FORMAT.

- An 11" x 17" sheet that can be folded once to form a four-page standard size newsletter is the most professional.
- Decide on a club masthead. Your masthead should incorporate the name of your club and the Saint Mary's logo.
- Choose a two-column or three-column-per-page format. You can add visual interest with photographs, graphics, clip art and lines.
- Eliminate envelopes. Reserve the top or bottom third (or half) of the back page for mailing labels. The opposite side of this space can be used as a tear-out registration form or R.S.V.P. form for events.

6. MAILING

- Alumnae mailing labels are available from the Alumnae Relations Office.
- Consider if you will be mailing your newsletter bulk mail or first class. If using bulk mail, be sure to have a publication schedule of six to eight weeks.
- Quick-print shops will machine-fold your newsletters for a very nominal fee. With a good, sharp fold you don't need tabs.
- The post office no longer accepts mail that is secured with staples. To avoid having your mailing returned, use adhesive tabs to secure the mailing together.

IF FUNDS ARE AN ISSUE FOR A NEWSLETTER, CONSIDER AN E-NEWSLETTER!

SEE THE ALUMNAE RELATIONS WEB PAGE FOR SAMPLE NEWSLETTERS

STYLISTIC GUIDELINES FOR ALUMNAE CLUB PUBLICATIONS

The following stylistic standards have been established by Marketing and Communications Office to insure a unified, professional image and stylistic uniformity in all College and club publications. Your cooperation in integrating these standards into your club invitations, newsletters, directories, etc., is greatly appreciated.

1. Always write out "Saint" when referring to Saint Mary's College.

INCORRECT

St. Mary's College

CORRECT

Saint Mary's College

2. Always use the complete and correct reference to Saint Mary's College

INCORRECT

Saint Mary's College of Notre Dame
Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, Indiana

CORRECT

Saint Mary's College, Notre Dame, Indiana

3. Le Mans is two words. A space should be used between the words.

4. CSC. – According to the preference of the Sisters of the Holy Cross, this suffix does not contain periods. It is also preferred to write out "Sister" instead of using the abbreviation.

Saint Mary's has two official signatures and identifications which should be used on every piece of material printed by the club or by the Alumnae Office for the club. Saint Mary's has an official logo and identification which should be used on every piece of material printed by the club. There are two versions of the logo. Either one is acceptable for club use.



Please use either logo exactly as it is provided on the Alumnae Relations webpage.

The logos may appear in a variety of positions on the publication: as the heading, at the bottom, on the back, or merely in the return address portion.

Your club name may be printed below either signature if desired.

Customized letterhead and envelopes may be ordered from the Alumnae Office for local club use.

Both logos are available in an e-mailable format.

MAILINGS

How many per year? To all club members? To dues-paying members only? First Class? Bulk mail? The answers to these questions will be determined by any number of factors — how many events do you plan per year, how many dues-paying members can you expect each year, and how much of a chunk will each mailing take out of your club budget. With ever-increasing postage costs, club leaders must carefully evaluate the scope of the club mailings and make every mailing count.

Once a club has been organized and its agenda planned, all alumnae in the club area should be notified of the full calendar via a newsletter at the beginning of the club year. Continuation of newsletters during the year helps to reinforce your club's visibility and activity level.

It is recommended that you send club mailings to all alumnae in your area, not just dues-paying members. However, because postage costs take a large bite out of a club's budget, many clubs mail only to dues-paying members after the initial annual mailing. While inclusion in club mailings can be an incentive to paying dues, it is important to give all members an opportunity to renew their association with the local club at least annually.

Bulk mail is considerably less expensive than First

Class mail but it requires adherence to specific postal regulations and advance planning by the club. The primary requirement is that the mailing must contain a minimum of 200 pieces. Further, Bulk mail means slow mail. Depending on what area of the country your club is in, and whether your Bulk mail was mailed locally or from Notre Dame, delivery of Bulk mail may be as quick as two days or as slow as six weeks.

GUIDELINES FOR MAILINGS

PLAN AHEAD!!!

Decide if your mailing will go out **FIRST CLASS** or **BULK MAIL**. This will affect your overall timetable.

Mailing labels (and selected lists) are generally available for mailing to you within 48 hours after receiving your request. Contact the Alumnae Relations Office for labels.

Do not use mailing labels more than one month old. We prefer that you reorder a new set rather than use a set that may have an incorrect address.

Please do not attempt to keep an address list on your home computer. Saint Mary's Advancement Services Department attempts to make all address changes within 48 hours of receipt of notification, thereby assuring the most up-to-date information possible.

FIRST CLASS MAIL

First Class mail should go out approximately four weeks prior to the event. **SEE 12-WEEK PLANNING GUIDE IN SECTION 3.** This allows two to four days for delivery and at least three weeks advance arrival for RSVP response and calling time.

Allow at least 10 working days for production of your materials in the Alumnae Office (printing, preparation for mailing).

Clubs will be charged for First Class mail at the current postal rate. To reduce postage, many clubs are using postcards for meeting announcements and informal invitations. Note: Postcards larger than 4" x 6" do not qualify for postcard rate.

BULK MAIL

Bulk mail is considerably less expensive than First Class mail but it requires adherence to specific postal regulations and advance planning by the club.

Bulk mail requirements:

1. The mailing must contain a minimum of 200 pieces. For clubs with less than 200 members, bulk mail is not an option.
2. It must be in zip code order and broken down further according to postal guidelines. (Call your bulk mail acceptance unit for more information about sorting requirements.)
3. A special postal indicia (provided by Saint Mary's) must be printed in the upper right-hand corner of the envelope (stamp area).
4. The mailing must be mailed from the Notre Dame, Indiana Post Office.

Bulk mail means slow mail. Depending on what area of the country your club is in, delivery of bulk mail from the College may be as quick as a few days or as slow as six weeks. The general rule of thumb is to allow at least three to four weeks for delivery. If your club uses bulk mail regularly, it is wise to note the mailing date from Saint Mary's and the arrival date for two or three mailings to get an idea of the average time that it takes for a bulk mailing to reach your city. This means that you must put your Bulk mailing in the mail no later than seven weeks prior to your event to allow for four weeks delivery and three weeks advance arrival and response time. Tack on at least another five to ten working days if you have your materials printed and mailed from the Alumnae Office.

Clubs will be charged for bulk mailings at the current postal rate.

NOTE: The U.S. Postal Service has determined that Saint Mary's alumnae clubs do not qualify for the College's non-profit bulk rate, based on the IRS ruling that alumnae clubs do not qualify for tax exempt status. **SEE SECTION 2.** Saint Mary's may continue to prepare and mail bulk mail on behalf of alumnae clubs, but the club will be charged at the for-profit rate. (Actual per piece cost depends on the dimensions of the piece, the total number of pieces, the weight, and the 3-digit zip code density. Total weight of each piece may be as much as 3 oz.)