



The

# Communiqué

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CATHOLIC ALUMNI CLUBS INTERNATIONAL

Winter 2008

## Anchorage Alaska

By Doris Coulbourne  
CAC of Washington, DC

It was nearly two years ago when I first learned CACI was hosting its 2008 Annual Convention in Anchorage, Alaska. I knew right away I wanted to attend. Not only would I get an opportunity to see an amazing state with its vast wildlife and wilderness, I would be attending my first CACI Convention. So I registered for the entire stay in Anchorage, the post-convention trip to Denali National State Park, and all the daily excursions and tours. I was not disappointed!

I was so incredibly excited and enthusiastic for this trip that I began researching as much about Alaska as I could. I purchased the Alaska Travel Guide Book and the Anchorage Visitor's Guide magazine, both of which gave me valuable trip planning information, and read these two publications on my long flight from Washington to Anchorage. I watched several movies based on Alaska, as well as several TV specials on The Weather Channel, The History Channel, and The Discovery Channel. I am a huge animal lover, so I was especially moved when I viewed The Weather Channel's *Race to Nome*, the story of the original 1925 dog sled race from Nenana to Nome which delivered live-saving diphtheria serum and prevented an epidemic. I especially remember watching two of the dog sled leaders, Balto and

Togo. Balto was the remarkable lead dog in the final relay as he led his team through a blinding blizzard across the Norton Sound. I was looking forward to getting the opportunity to meet some champion sled dogs.

On my first day in Anchorage, a number of us headed to our home for the week — the Millennium Hotel — for our first group dinner. The hotel lobby is decorated with stuffed polar bears, black bears, a grizzly bear, Dall sheep, musk ox, lynx, fox, salmon, halibut, rainbow trout, and much more! Although I didn't arrive in time on Sunday to attend CACI's special "First-Timers Pre-Dinner Party," I was pleased to hear at dinner Sunday night that my chapter, Washington, DC, won CACI's "Mileage Award," given to the chapter whose members traveled the most miles to the convention (number of attendees multiplied by the number of traveled miles). We were entertained after dinner by a visit from a local Alaskan man who told us about his actual encounters with grizzly bears. We were then treated to an entertaining dance from the Native Alaska Heritage Center.

The following day our group took a tour of downtown Anchorage and the Alaska Native Heritage Museum. We saw exhibits and demonstrations of the Native Alaskan culture and habitats. While driving downtown, I saw a statue of Balto, the lead dog that led the

sled team into Nome in 1925. We stopped to see Cook's Inlet and drove by the Alaska Railroad Depot and Ship's Creek (loaded with salmon!). After dinner, our group participated in square dancing. I was paired with CACI Chaplain Fr. Joe Codori (Pittsburgh).

The next day we headed south for a 2-hour ride to Seward. Along the way I saw my first moose in the marshland. At Seward we boarded the *Discovery* for a beautiful, sunny, yet very cold and windy day out to the Pacific Ocean in search of whales and other sea wildlife. I saw some cute sea otters and the glaciers along Kenai Fjords National Park. The captain steered us close to two pods of Orca "killer" whales, the largest of the dolphin species. We saw a giant humpback whale, approximately 30 feet long and weighing 60,000 pounds, which put on a great show for us, spraying water out of its spout and fluking its tale. I spotted a second but smaller humpback whale. The captain pointed out many sea lions and puffins on the rocks nearby. We sailed over to Holgate Glacier, where huge chunks of ice fell into the ocean with a loud, thunderous sound. On the bus ride back, we spotted our first Dall sheep on the rocks and bald eagles soaring above the water along the highway.

(continued on page 3)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello fellow CACers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who put their trust in me and elected me the President of our wonderful organization. My fellow Executive Board members are: Loretta Lovell (North Jersey) as 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, Susie Shearer (Detroit) as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Steve Valko (St. Louis) as Treasurer, Evie Pullis (New York) as Secretary, Gerry Voelkel (New York) as the Eastern Region Vice-President, Mike Kappel (MMRV) as the Midwest Region Vice-President, Michael Coogan (Washington, DC) as Past President and Fr. Joe Codori (Pittsburgh) as our Chaplain.

It was so good to see many

of you in Anchorage, Alaska this past June/July. I found Alaska to be amazing and the scenery was gorgeous. For me, words can not adequately describe the natural beauty of our 49<sup>th</sup> state. I was amazed at the amount of daylight we had. I saw one sunset while I was there and it occurred after midnight. It seemed unusual for it to still be daylight while we were having our after hours parties. Special thanks to Barbara Accordino, Pat Bray and Bob Giardina for all of their hard work before, during and after the convention. I thought it was a most enjoyable convention.

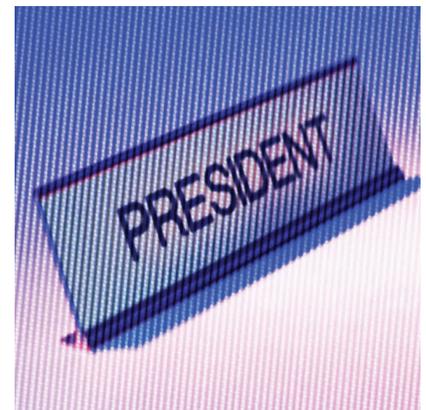
Please keep in mind upcoming CACI activities. Many people in CACI have been working on the upcoming Regionals as well as the 2009 national convention in

Lake George, New York. The coordinators, Neal Hyatt and Janet Yntema have been hard at work planning, scheduling and preparing for our trip to this beautiful part of the Northeast. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Just a bug in your ear about the 2010 CACI convention. It will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This city hosted the very first CACI convention and in 2010 it will be our 50<sup>th</sup> convention. The Board of Directors at the meeting in Anchorage decided to invite all former and current CAC members to this convention since it will be our 50<sup>th</sup>. So pass the word and make plans to be in Colorado Springs in 2010. There will be more information in upcoming issues.

It will be my honor to serve the members of CACI this year and thank you once again for placing your trust in me. You can contact me at [CAC@caci.org](mailto:CAC@caci.org) or call me at (812) 284-4349.

*Rhonda Higgins* (Louisville)



## *Catholic Alumni Clubs International*

### 2008-2009 Officers

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| <i>President:</i> Rhonda Higgins (Louisville) .....             | 812-284-4349 |
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| <i>Western Region VP:</i> Vacant .....                          |              |
| <i>Chaplain:</i> Fr. Joe Codori (Pittsburgh).....               | 412-931-4624 |

The *Communiqué* is published by The Catholic Alumni Clubs International (CACI), an umbrella organization for the more than 30 local Catholic Alumni Club (CAC) chapters across the country. Members of CAC chapters are college and nursing school graduates who are free to marry in the Church.

The purpose of CACI is to host an annual national convention, facilitate communication among local clubs, and represent the interests of single Catholics in our Church at-large. The annual national convention is during the Summer and hosts more than 150 CACers from across the country. Smaller Regional Weekends across the United States are also offered, allowing CAC chapters in specific various regions of the country to come together for fun and fellowship.

CACI is a nonprofit organization organized under the laws of the state of Colorado. The address of President Rhonda Higgins is 210 Ettels Lane, #107, Clarksville, IN 47129

The next day we visited the Alaska Wildlife Conversation Center which cares for injured and orphaned wildlife that can't care for themselves in the wild. We saw a grizzly bear and two brown bears. The park guide held up an apple and the grizzly came right up to the fence and stood very tall for us. Later, all the bears — looking like teddy bears — played in the pond. There were also moose, black tail deer, caribou, black bears, a bald eagle, bison, elk, red fox and musk ox. After leaving the Center, we went to ride the tram up Mt. Alyeska. It was a gorgeous sunny day and the view was spectacular! Back at the hotel that evening the group attended a pre-dinner Mass before our semi-formal dinner/dance.

The next day we headed off north to Wasilla, where we visited Martin Buser's Happy Trails Kennels, home to about 50 Iditarod champion sled dogs that are mostly husky and malamute mix. The dogs are treated like athletes and can burn as much as 11,000 calories a day when racing in temperatures 30 degrees below zero. One female had seven puppies and CACers had the opportunity to hold them. Mr. Buser showed us his trophy room, a make-shift checkpoint of the Iditarod race, and did a demonstration of the dogs taking him on a sled ride around his property. That evening my Washington, DC roommate, Eileen McGlenn, and I dined at the Glacier Brewhouse, where I finally got to try some local Alaskan salmon.

On Friday, about 50 of us boarded a motor coach and headed up the highway to Denali National Park. Along the way we stopped at the Iditarod Race Headquarters, where I got to pet

more champion sled dogs and hold more puppies. Inside the Visitor Center I found Balto, who is stuffed and in a glass enclosure for all to see (Togo is stuffed in a museum in Philadelphia). Some in our group took a short sled dog ride on a wheeled cart. For lunch, we stopped in Talkeetna, the town on which the TV show "Northern Exposure" was based. We stopped at an overlook to take pictures of Mt. McKinley, the highest peak in North America with an altitude of 20,320 feet. That evening we had a very entertaining dinner at the Denali Dinner Theatre, where the wait staff performed a musical comedy show. The comedy skit was hilarious and included participants from the audience. I'm sure the men who got a big kiss from Miss Kitty, the barmaid, will never forget that evening.

On Saturday morning, a few hardy CACers enjoyed a scenic white water rafting trip down the Nenana River. That afternoon we all boarded a bus for a Tender Wilderness Tour in Denali National Park. Our tour guide pointed out snowshoe hares (rabbits), ground squirrels, caribou, bald eagles, ptarmigans, and several Dall sheep. But the best sightings were of a grizzly bear and her cub high on a hill grazing in the tall grass, and a lynx. The grizzly bear was blonde and her cub was dark brown.

On Sunday morning I rose early and took my first scenic helicopter ride. It was an excursion tour around Denali Park and I sat in the co-pilot's seat! We flew over a mountain and saw a herd of about 50 caribou. We saw the peak of Mt. McKinley and rafters going down the Nenana River. It was magnificent! My only

disappointment: the take-off and landing weren't as exciting as I had hoped.

Later that day our group boarded the Alaska Railroad for the eight-hour scenic ride back to Anchorage. We saw gorgeous snow-capped mountain along the Alaska Range, moose wandering in the marshland, and a bear cub climbing a tree. I especially enjoyed riding over Hurricane Gulch.

I had a truly amazing time in Alaska. I will never forget the many new friends I made, the incredible wildlife and scenery, the great food, the helicopter ride, and the Alaska Railroad. I have many lifetime memories from this vacation. My special thanks to my roommate Eileen, Barbara Accordino (Louisville), and new friends Michael Glicksman (Baltimore), Dorothy Hann (San Francisco), Frank Cisco (Buffalo), Tom Manion (Detroit), and Rosalie Hunter (Detroit).

For those who have not yet been to a CACI convention, New York's Lake George awaits you in 2009!



Doris Coulbourne (Washington, DC) holds a future Iditarod champion sled dog — a husky and malamute mix — at Iditarod Headquarters

**MESSAGE FROM  
THE EASTERN REGION  
VICE PRESIDENT**

The 2008 Spring Eastern Regional, coordinated by Gerry Voelkel (New York/ER VP), took place at the Beach Cove Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in mid-April. Fifty CACers attended this long weekend.

On Friday evening, CACers enjoyed dinner and a show at the Alabama Theatre. On Saturday, attendees took tours of Brookgreen Gardens and Georgetown and passed through a number of interesting towns south of Myrtle Beach.

Special thanks to the other Eastern Region officers for their help in running this weekend: Evie Pullis (New York/ER Asst VP) was the Reservations Chair, Pat Dugal (New York/ER Treasurer) was the Treasurer and sent out a special publicity letter, and Loretta Lovell (North Jersey/ER Secretary) was the Religious Chair and set up the name tags.

The 2008 joint Fall Eastern/Midwestern Regional, coordinated by the Midwest, took place at the Hyatt Regency at the Arcades in downtown Cleveland in mid-October. Forty-eight CACers attended this weekend.

The coordinators kept the attendees very busy on Saturday! The Eastern and Midwestern delegates' meetings were held in the early morning. These meetings were followed by a city tour. In the early afternoon, CACers had the opportunity to go to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. In the late afternoon, a seminar was given and then a Mass was offered by Fr. Larry Ventline. Finally, CACers enjoyed a dinner cruise in the evening aboard the "Nautica Queen".

Plans for the Spring Eastern Regional (May 1-3, 2009) at the Marriott Waterside Hotel in downtown Norfolk, Virginia are well underway. An article about this regional can be found in this issue of the COMMUNIQUE.

I hope to see many CACers in

2009, especially at the Spring Eastern Regional in Norfolk in May and at the CACI Convention in upstate New York in July.

*Gerry Voelkel (New York)*

**NAUTICAL NORFOLK-Ahoy CACers!**

Norfolk, Virginia has a rich history spanning more than 400 years. With its proximity to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean, Norfolk has been a center of commerce and industry, as well as a strategic military location. Today, Norfolk is home to the largest naval base in the world. In the last ten years, downtown Norfolk has undergone a major renaissance.

CACers will have the opportunity to see the "New Norfolk" because the 2009 CAC Spring Eastern Regional will be held in this city from May 1 - 3, 2009. Our hotel is the very beautiful Marriott Waterside Hotel in downtown Norfolk. This regional weekend will be hosted by the Eastern Region officers.

On Friday night, CACers will be given the opportunity to see a show ("Virginia International Tattoo") at the Scope Theatre. The "tattoo" is a patriotic pageant that features bands from several NATO countries, bagpipers, precision drill teams, and dancing. On Saturday morning, there will be a parade in downtown Norfolk (near our hotel) to celebrate Azalea Fest. On Saturday afternoon, there will be a walking tour of sites in downtown Norfolk along the historic "Cannonball Trail"; these sites include the MacArthur Memorial Museum and Center, the Hunter House Victorian Museum, the Freemason Historic District, Pagoda Park, the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, the battleship USS Wisconsin, and the Nauticus Maritime Museum.

On Saturday evening, there will be a dinner cruise on the "Spirit of Norfolk" that includes a buffet dinner, dancing, entertainment, and sailing past many sites (including the Norfolk Naval Station, the world's largest naval base). On Sunday, after Mass and a brunch, CACers can take a ferry ride across the Elizabeth River and tour the quaint "Olde Towne" Historic District of Portsmouth. Many

of the sites in downtown Norfolk are within walking distance of our hotel. There is also a free shuttle bus, the NET (Norfolk Electric Transit), to take visitors to the various downtown attractions. So, be sure to arrive early on Friday and leave late on Sunday so you can enjoy all of these CAC-sponsored activities!

Note that the historic towns of Williamsburg, Jamestown and Yorktown and the seaside town of Virginia Beach are all within a short distance of Norfolk. Those who would like to spend a few extra days in the Norfolk area could visit some or all of these towns, in addition to spending the May 1 - 3 weekend in Norfolk with their CAC friends and acquaintances.

Norfolk is approximately 150 miles south of Washington, DC. For those traveling by car, directions from all areas will be sent with confirmation letters. Those traveling by plane should fly into Norfolk International Airport. Those traveling by bus should take the bus to Norfolk. Those traveling by Amtrak should buy a ticket to Norfolk; the train will go to Newport News and then there will be a connecting bus to Norfolk. The bus station in Norfolk is about 10 blocks from our hotel.

Prices for the weekend (for reservations postmarked by February 9) are as follows: \$425 (single) and \$295 (double). Please note that the Marriott Waterside Hotel, the Scope Theatre, and the "Spirit of Norfolk" dinner cruise all require early reservation deadlines for our May 1 - 3, 2009 CAC weekend in Norfolk. So, mail in your reservations no later than the end of February to guarantee your room and your tickets!

For the 2009 CAC Spring Eastern Regional, Gerry Voelkel is the Weekend Coordinator, Evie Pullis is the Reservations Chair, and Pat Dugal is the Publicity Chair. For further information about this CAC weekend, call Gerry at 718-655-3365.

Be sure to join your fellow CACers in "Nautical Norfolk" for an "Anchors Aweigh in May" weekend.

## Midwest Regional Update

Greetings to all CAC'ers from around the country. I am the new regional VP for the Midwest this Year. My Club is MMRV. The other officers for the region are Andi Brosch Assistant VP (Cincinnati), Russ Ruhling Treasurer (St. Louis/MMRV), and Tracey Becker Secretary (Cincinnati).

The first Regional Meeting was held in Cleveland Oct.9-12<sup>th</sup>, 2008. It was a joint Eastern -Midwest meeting. The weekend included a dinner cruise and optional tours of the city and the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. There were 48 CAC'ers in attendance. Two seminars were held to promote club growth. They were on the Topics of Leadership and How to make your club run smoothly Part I.

More seminars are planned for the Spring 2009 meeting in Louisville May 22<sup>nd</sup> - May 25<sup>th</sup>. In Louisville there will be opportunities to go to the races, take a city/winery tour and go to the street festival "Abbey Road" which remembers the Beatles and their music.

During the Summer CACI will be holding the annual national meeting July 12<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Lake George, NY. This in the Saratoga area and is famous for its history as well as its race track. A wonderful place for a summer vacation.

A fall 2009 Meeting with the Eastern Region is planned Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009 in Alexandria, VA. The region is planning working with the planners to add more days of touring the Washington DC area. A car convoy to the weekend is being looked into for those who would rather drive than fly.

I have started a electronic newsletter for the Region with the cooperation and help of my regional officers. The first issue went out Oct. 1, 2008. The next issue will be Jan. 1, 2009. It is only sent via the internet to at least one officer or planner from each Midwest club. If there is not officer from a given club that has an E-

mail address then a copy will be mailed to one of the officers/planners. The clubs are supposed to distribute the newsletter as they see fit. The reason for the electronic newsletter is to cut the cost of production while at the same time promoting Regional Club growth. If a CAC'er wants to be on the E-Mail list they should E-Mail me at [Mikek21798@aol.com](mailto:Mikek21798@aol.com). I request that all Midwest clubs contribute to the newsletter and share the successes and failures so that all Midwest clubs can learn grow from this experience.

The Midwest officers are here to help the clubs in the region with whatever problems they might have. We want to grow the number of members in each club. To that end we are sponsoring seminars at each Regional Meeting. I ask each club to send at least one member to the upcoming meeting in Louisville so that they can interact with the other Clubs in the region and bring back the info and ideas discussed in the Seminar. Thus will help our region to grow and for the Clubs to get to know each other better. The officers wish all a Happy New Year). May God bless you and all members of the CAC family!

*Mike Kappel*  
Midwest Region Vice President

### Midwest Regional Weekend May 22-25, 2009

" A visit to the Beatles era  
and Louisville sites"

Come and enjoy meeting CAC'ers from around the country. The price on a package for a double is \$330. The double package includes three breakfasts and two dinners. There is also a single package for \$530. It will be held at the Brown Hotel in downtown Louisville. The hotel and the area is described below.

The Brown, an historic Four Diamond, AAA hotel in downtown Louisville features classic English Renaissance architecture. The opulent two-story lobby has a hand-painted, coffered ceiling, Bottocino marble floor-

ing, finely carved mahogany furnishings and Palladian-style windows. The Georgian-Revival style exterior is trimmed in stone and terra cotta.

The Brown Hotel is in the Theater district, a block from the [Palace Theatre](#), adjacent to the [Brown Theatre](#), two blocks from [4th Street Live](#), four blocks from the [Kentucky International Convention Center](#) and 5 minutes [Louisville International Airport](#) (complimentary shuttle service available).

The Hotel offers complimentary high speed internet access throughout. All [guest rooms](#) feature European, goose down duvets, feather beds, 310 thread count sheets and three, multi-line phones. Bathrooms include Spanish, Ramora marble and granite-top vanities. Exclusive accommodations are offered on the privately keyed Club floors.

There also will be optional tours. On Saturday a day at the races is planned. Churchill Downs is one of the most famous tracks around the country. Our group will have special seating to enjoy the races from a great view. On Sunday a city and winery Tour is planned. There will also be time to take advantage of the "Abbey Road Festival" which is a nostalgic look at the Beatles Era.

In addition to the Tours there will be seminars on Club development. The region wants to help all the clubs of the region grow and also help the clubs gain more younger members. We need all clubs to at least plan to send one member to the seminars so that they can participate in the dialogue and bring back the ideas to their local club.

So what are you waiting for? Make your plans to come to the Spring Weekend in Louisville May 22<sup>nd</sup> to May 25<sup>th</sup>. Please note that Southwest Air-

# THE BEATLES

**CACI 2009 Annual  
Vacation/Convention**

Plan to join CACI for our 2009 Annual Convention from Sunday, **July 12** to Saturday, **July 18, 2009** at the *Best Western Fort William Henry Hotel* on Lake George in the Adirondacks of New York.

Lake George (and neighboring Lake Champlain) are two of the largest lakes in the area and they form the eastern boundary of the Adirondack park preserve. The lake area of upper New York has nearly 3000 lakes! This pleasant, beautiful vacation takes place on the banks of Lake George. The mountains are grand. The region is full of history. It's a wonderful place to spend a relaxing vacation week.

This historic area is a gorgeous paradise to those who enjoy the outdoors. The *Fort William Henry* hotel, on the southern end of Lake George, boasts

an awe-inspiring view of the tranquil waters. Embark on a leisurely cruise around the lake, rent a canoe or sailboat, go white water rafting, waterskiing, and parasailing. On-shore, go for walks, discover hiking trails, and enjoy band concerts.

To reach Lake George, air transportation is available with many flights into Albany. The hotel provides a van to and from the airport for \$25 each way. Amtrak, Adirondack Trailways bus, and Greyhound bus have nearby stops. For East coast CAC clubs, the location is convenient for driving by car. Come celebrate our East coast convention with other CAC clubs!

We are going back to a 6 day vacation (2007 and 2008 were 5 day).convention pricing will be \$849(double occupancy rooms). This includes six breakfast buffets and four dinners also included is a dinner dance cruise on Lake George and dances at the hotel. Day trips including a train excursion and

visits to the state capital at Albany and the Baseball Hall of Fame at Cooperstown will be available at an extra cost. Additional days, and a pre-Convention day trip to Saratoga Springs, will also be available for additional cost.

The history of this beautiful area goes back hundreds of years with the American Indians and early settlers. There are centuries of memories here. Make some memories of your own in the Summer of 2009. Immerse yourself—come with us to Lake George!

For further information, contact **Neal Hyatt** at 301-229-1455 or via E-Mail (preferred) at [nealhyatt@att.net](mailto:nealhyatt@att.net), or contact **Janet Yntema** (Detroit) at 313-882-



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