



LA REINA

... where quality and the individual count

Alumnae Edition

oday

Fall 2013

Alumnae Picnic 2013

They came as far as 5,660 miles away and as close as a mile: Alycia Radford Lee '83 traveled from Brussels; Andi Whittington Elliott '78, from Maryland (2,700 miles), and Angela Peate, from down the street (1.4 miles).

The Alumnae Reunion Picnic was held on September 7 in the school cafeteria. The classes of 1973, 1978, 1983, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008 were honored at the picnic and met again later that evening at venues around the Conejo.

Cafeteria chef, Cameron Parton, made hamburgers to order. He honored some of the past and present teachers when he served Patty Melts (named after retired teacher, Patty Papps), Hirsch burgers (named after Assistant Principal Stan Hirsch), and Becca Burgers (named after Assistant Principal, Rebecca Adams '81).

What made the picnic especially memorable was the attendance of retired employees and teachers who accompanied their daughters: Lois Taylor, former front office manager, came with her daughter Teresa '73; Dolores Mohr, former teacher, came with Margaret '83, and Isabel Peralta, secretary, with Liz '83.

Families were also well represented. Alycia Radford Lee came with her husband, Krijn de Kraa; her in-laws, Krijn and

Gerrie de Kraa, and her parents, Bobbie and Clarence Radford. The Hopcus family Teresa '77, Dona '81 and Tracy '91 arrived with their father, Ray. Teresa had on her 1977 letter jacket and Traci donned the full uniform.

Sister Josanne, principal from 1973 to 1984 was a special guest, as was Cecilia Coe, principal from 2004-2010.

Reactions to the picnic spoke to the culture of the school. Leigh Ann Grabowsky Margolin '93, who came from Evergreen Colorado, wrote, "I really loved being back on campus and seeing so many teachers! It was great to get to chat with them. I liked seeing students in their uniforms, taking pictures and giving tours...it reminded me what a special place La Reina is (and how awesome uniforms are!)."

Colleen Macdonald commented on the entire weekend: "What a treat to see so many faculty attend the event! I loved seeing Sister Josanne and Sister Ann Carla '69. I have such fond memories of my La Reina days. So nice to see that the traditions that meant so much to us are still a big part of La Reina today."

Now, get ready to celebrate La Reina's 50th anniversary next year!!



The Class of 1973: Back: Teresa Taylor Allen, Adriana Iturriaga Pace, Cristina Lacoste, Laura Lademan Schaffell. Front: Polly Sherman Braiwick, Jennifer Pittello Knapp, Eileen McAndrew, Liliana Letiero Murphy.



The Class of 1983: Back: Alycia Radford Lee, Margaret Mohr, Nikki Duda Shea, Bridget McAdam, Stefanie Buck. Front: Colleen Macdonald, Jenny Coffey Kindred, Liz Peralta Hull, Deirdre (Wood) McDermott, Cathy Glover Svitek.

Alumnae News

Class of 1987

Cristy Richey McNay earned an M.A. in Educational Leadership from California Lutheran University. Cristy is the Director of Admissions at La Reina.

Class of 1988

Erin Cockburn Garcia and her husband, Michael, welcomed Emersyn Kangqi (Emmie) to their home. Emmie was born February 4, 2012 and joined the Garcia family on April 14, 2013.

Class of 1989

Annabelle Sbarbatti Wiseman works at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, as a Project Coordinator in the Education Department. She helps organize scientific workshops around the world. She and her husband, Steve, have three sons: Max, 8; Alex, 7; Elias, 4.

Class of 1993

Skye Stock McCarthy and her husband, Pat, live in Hopkinton, MA. They have two children: James, 7 and Emma, 4. Skye volunteers as the Assistant Children's Supervisor for the preschool program at her local Bible Study Fellowship.

In 2011, **Ellen Brindle Clark** received her M.B.A. with a concentration in Finance from Rider University. She works as a faculty assistant in Molecular Biology at Princeton University. Her daughter, Jessica, is 13. Ellen still rides and trains horses, is a 4H Club leader and a county board member.

Class of 1995

In 2012, Dr. **Jennifer LaFemina** finished a fellowship at Memorial Sloan-Kettering in NYC in Surgical Oncology, with a focus on pancreatic diseases. She is an Assistant Professor of Surgery at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Jennifer graduated from

This 'n That

Former president of the Board of Trustees, Bob Rumer is now serving as President of La Reina High School. Bob, who succeeded Sr. LaReina Kelly, is the proud dad of three alumnae: Kathryn '05; Carolyn '06 and Madeline '10. Sister La Reina is now the Director of Mission Integration.

The Alumnae Reunion Picnic appears to have been just a warm-up for the evening events when alumnae gathered with just their class: According to Colleen McDonald, "A group from the class of '83 converged on Cisco's Saturday night for a truly fantastic time. We even sang a full version of the Alma Mater! I am not sure the surrounding guests were too impressed, but we sure enjoyed it."

Nine new teachers joined the staff this year: Alumnae are Wendy McLevige Axsen '01 (Science); Michelle Kane '08 (English); Christina Paulsen '05 (Core Cardio). Other teachers are Nathaniel Jones (Social Studies); Antonio Calisto (Math); Jennifer Ardy (Science); Laurence McAdamis (Foreign Language), Nisha Parmar (Science), and Barrie Silberberg (Sign Language).

The 30th annual Parent Guild auction, "Denim and Diamonds" was held on Saturday, November 2 in the gym. The changes were dramatic—gambling tables, food stations, and live music. Another new addition to the evening was the presentation of the Spirit of La Reina Awards, given to parent volunteers who have served the school community. The auction is the major fund raiser of the year, providing improvements to the physical plant and scholarship money for our students.

A first-ever Christian Service Fair, with representatives from 29 church groups and non-profits, was held in September. Kathleen O'Halloran '05, who works for Habitat for Humanity, kicked off the event with a motivational speech. Esha Chhabra '04 represented Rotary International, which sponsors the "Run So Others Can Walk" event to support the Global Polio Eradication Initiative.

Betsy Potts, Alumnae Director



Left: Isabel Peralta and Lois Taylor worked in the front office together while their daughters attended La Reina.



Right: Jennifer Laumann Cohen '81 with Alycia Radford Lee '83

La Reina Today • Alumnae Edition

reflecting the Catholic identity and mission of the school

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ALUMNAE REUNION 2013

A special thanks to reunion organizers:

Class of 1973: Jennifer Pittello Knapp
 Class of 1977: Janet Davis Scholl
 Class of 1983: Deirdre McDermott (Wood)
 Class of 1988: Laura Darling and Marguerite Olmedo Wolfe
 Class of 1993: Leigh Ann Grabowsky Margolin
 Class of 1998: Vicki Chou and Sarah Abler Rodriguez
 Class of 2003: Leslie Lopez
 Class of 2008: Thanks to the many members who came!!

2013 Reunion Awards and Notes

Traveled Farthest: Alycia Radford Lee '83, Brussels, Belgium (approx. 5660 miles)
Lives the Closest: Anglea Peate '08 (1.4 miles)
Most Unusual Career: Nikki Duda Shea '83, California Department of Justice, Sacramento Crime Lab; Mindy Edwards '03, Video Game Tester, Disney
Family Affair Award: Hopcus Family: Teresa '77, Dona '81 and Tracy '91 and dad, Ray.
Youngest Children: Marci Henjyoji Burnett '93 with 2 ½ month old Kaylee Sakura, and Sarah Abler Rodriguez '98 with 4 ½ month old Portia Ann.
La Reina Sisterhood Award—Class of 1973



Members of the Class of 2008 are pictured left enjoying the reunion! Back row: Allison Floyd, Michelle Kane, Erika Harlacher

Front row: Amanda Mundell, Amanda Turk, Danica Frye and Angela Peate



To conclude the Friendship Week assembly, alumnae moms joined their daughters and led the student body in the singing of the Alma Mater. Alumnae were Cristy Richey McNay '87 (Emma '16), Rebecca Joyce Adams '81 (Annie '18), Kris Lev Chisholm '91 (Emma '15), Jennifer Lau-mann Cohen '81 (Beth '16), Susan Sunde Laschi '84 (Marissa '14 and Kelly '16), Anne Ornelaz Interrante '86 (Marisa '15), Dana Ballaban Coppa '94 (Kaeli '18), Karen Butler '88 (Heather '17) and Jennifer Dransfeldt McGee '91 (Sarah '17).

UCLA Medical School and did her residency at Massachusetts General Hospital in surgery.

Class of 1997

Courtney Mahan Maguire and her husband, Neal, welcomed Bridget Kelly on March 15. Bridget joins sister Reagan and brother Luke.

Kristen Brison married Daniel Richardson on July 6. Former classmates, Kelly Byrd Lee-Kreil and Melissa Webster were bridesmaids. The couple lives in Charleston, South Carolina.

Class of 1998

Amy Pokross married Jake Perry in January 2013. Amy has a Master's degree in Philosophy from the University of North Texas (2007) and is earning a PhD in Humanities with a concentration in the History of Ideas at UT Dallas. She is teaching Introduction to World Religions at the local community college.

Jaclyn Harriott is an associate planner at Macy's in New York City. She and her husband, Barry, have a daughter Ava, 1.

Class of 1999

Sandhya Ramadas is engaged to Michael Kogge. Sandhya is an attorney with Bird Marella law firm in Los Angeles.

Class of 2001

Katie Stalley Klosterman was ordained as a minister in the United Methodist Church last June. Katie serves Foothills and Orting UMC churches in Washington. Katie and her husband, Nathan, live in Orting.

Class of 2003

Katherine Lamb Mays has a B.S. in Health Science and works at Livingston Memorial Visiting Nurse Association in Ventura. She and her husband, Matt, have two children: Bodie, 6 and Molly 6 months.

Reflections on Dina Derington Mabry '86

Beth Bellion lives in Canberra, Australia and “assists Australian government departments and corporations with their strategic planning, business planning, enterprise risk management, investment management and anything else it needs to be more effective.”

Ashley Schoonover is living in Paris, pursuing Le Grand Diplome from Le Cordon Bleu.

Monica Vidaurrazaga is in Guadalajara, Mexico pursuing an M.D. at Universidad Autonoma.

Melissa Aust Leveque lives in Vancouver, working towards a B.S. in Nursing.

Kenzie Mason Dake is a doctor of Physical Therapy.

Kelli Brooks Rael works at Marquette University in Milwaukee, planning alumni events around men's basketball games.

Jacki Chou recently became engaged to Cliff Wang. Jacki earned a dual Masters in Public Policy and a Masters in Planning from the University of Southern California. She works for Precision Health Economics.

Ashley Nichols works in the Information Systems Department at Amgen where she does business analysis and software programming. She graduated from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, with a B.S. in Computer Science.

Class of 2004

Emily Robbins married Karl Beutner on August 24 in Santa Barbara. Emily teaches 10th grade English at La Reina.

Class of 2005

Kathleen O'Hallaran has been working at Habitat for Humanity of Ventura County for three years. She studied at the University of Arizona and is continuing her graduate studies at USC's Price School of Public Policy.

Dina Derington Mabry is the winner of the first ever Spirit of La Reina Award. The award will be given annually to an alumna whose “distinguished service to La Reina has had a profound impact on the entire school over the years.”

Dina has had a profound impact on the school. And on me. A number of years ago, I recruited Dina to serve on the Alumnae Board. She was standing behind me at the checkout line at Costco. When I recognized her, I took full advantage of our former relationship—I had taught her English in the mid 80's.

On the way out to the parking lot, I congratulated myself on my powers of persuasion, not considering that Dina was trapped in that line—with me in front of her and her three children (Maddie and twins Victoria and James) next to her, the course of least resistance was to just say “yes.”

I soon found out that it was Dina, not I, who had the persuasive skills. When her oldest daughter, Maddy '13, began attending La Reina, Dina became president of the Alumnae Board and was determined to put more fun into our La Reina world.

Her ideas came over the phone and at the meetings; in the middle of the day and the end of the day. Roadblocks did not deter her—because one of the wonderful qualities that Dina has is that she doesn't just churn out ideas, she follows through on them.

For example, when she persuaded the school to hold the first ever father-daughter dance, Jerseys and Jeans, she and her friend Bernadette Larratt, mother of Stephanie '13 and Megan '15, came to school every day at lunch, both sporting NFL jerseys, and moved from table to table urging students to come. They did. The dance was a rousing success.



Betsy Potts congratulates Dina on receiving the first ever “Spirit of La Reina” award.

Dina did not stop there. Let's have more fun, she said. She persuaded the parents and the Alumnae Board to sponsor Springtime in Paris, a luncheon-boutique. True to her nature, Dina oversaw every aspect of the event: from helping to design the invitations, to recruiting the vendors, to planning the menu. The event was a sellout. Then Dina started her own company, BGA Insurance. Thinking about the best ways for individuals and businesses to be insured did not stop her from thinking about the best ways for the girls at La Reina to be entertained. She would call me from the 405 or the 101 or the 23, wheels turning (the brain ones, not the car ones).

Then Maddy graduated in 2013 (she is attending the University of Arizona). And Dina told me that she was going to take a break from the board. She wanted to spend more time with Victoria and James (now 13), and with her business.

How could she do this to me? Maybe having received the first ever Spirit of La Reina Award at the auction on November 2, will persuade her that it's time for her break to be over.

Dina, you still have my cell number. Call me.

By: Betsy Potts

One Person's La Reina Story: Lieutenant Emily Gibbons

"My La Reina roots run deep," says LT Emily Gibbons '97, attorney in the United States Coast Guard and Instructor at the Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

After graduating from the University of San Diego with a B.A. in English Literature in 2001, Emily returned to La Reina and taught junior high English, math and study skills.

Two years later, she was off to law school at the University of Hawaii. Why law? "Charles Dickens," she says, "I read *Great Expectations* in Mrs. Adams' English class. I love Dickens and remember him saying that it was useful to think like a lawyer. I didn't picture myself as an attorney—I just wanted to think like one."

Why the University of Hawaii? "Joseph Conrad," she says. "Senior English. We read *Heart of Darkness*. Marlowe was a sailor. I always wondered what kinds of laws governed the sea. I knew that an expert in Law of the Sea taught at the University of Hawaii. I decided that's where I wanted to go."

After powering through law school in two and a half years, she returned to California, took the bar and began to work at a firm

that specialized in contracts and wills. Not for her. But, what kind of law was?

Then she began to think about the internship she had had at a law firm in Hawaii. The firm had three partners—one from the Navy, one from the Air Force, and the other from the Coast Guard. An inveterate lover of stories, Emily remembered liking the Coast Guard stories best. She researched the Coast Guard, liked their mission, and applied.

Since her commissioning in 2008 (a coup in itself since the USCG accepts only 6 attorneys a year), no year has been the same. She has been up in helicopters and out on sea patrols. She was sworn in before the Supreme Court and hung out with Vice-President Biden before he gave the keynote address at graduation last May. One year, she was on loan to the Navy to try courts-



LT Emily Gibbons with Vice President Joe Biden.

martial cases. Then she became one of the attorneys for the admiral in command of the 5th Coast Guard District.

That gave me the strength to argue on their behalf." At La Reina she had found a passion for teaching. She wanted to teach at the Coast Guard Academy, but there was no open position for her rank. Her superiors were impressed by the way she had performed and by her strong writing skills ("I was trained very well at La Reina") and created a position for her rank. "Teaching at the Academy has been my dream job because it combines everything I love," she says.

This past summer she taught a course in English literature. "Imagine," she says, "I was paid by the U.S. government to teach Shakespeare. I am in heaven." Currently, she is teaching courses in Maritime Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice.

Her education at La Reina, she says, pervades everything she does in the Coast Guard. "La Reina was my foundation. I learned to believe in myself. I learned to write. I learned to love literature. I learned I wanted to have an impact on the community. I wanted to do something honorable and righteous with my life. Every day I put on the Coast Guard uniform, I feel proud."

La Reina feels proud too. Of Emily. Of the lessons she learned. Of the road she took—the road that has made all the difference.



The Fifth Coast Guard District Commander, RADM Ratti presents LT Emily with a letter of appreciation.

In Their Own Words

Class of 2009

Tessa Katch graduated with honors from Pepperdine University with a BA in Advertising and graphic design/ creative writing concentrations. She and her family were recently featured in the Ventura County Star for completing their goal of traveling to all 50 states.

Lacey Majus (Smith) graduated from Channel Islands and has begun a teaching degree program.

Jackie Lauletta graduated with honors from Cornell University with a double major in biology and animal science. Jackie is at UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

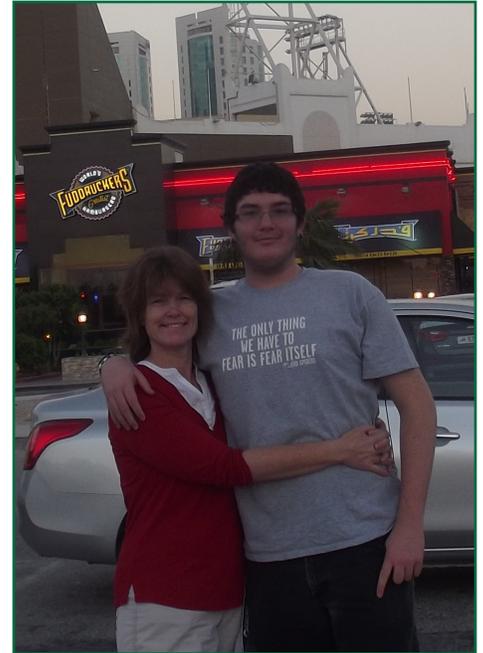
*Send your alumnae news to Betsy Potts
bpotts@lareina.com*

*Be sure to check out our new website
www.lareina.com*

Michelle Lundby, Class of 1988, wrote recently that she could not attend her 25th high school reunion because she was in the Middle East. When I asked her for more information about herself—this is what she wrote.

I started working for the Department of State in 2004 and am currently the Executive Assistant to the U.S. Ambassador to Qatar, similar to the aide to the President, only more intense (ha ha). Prior to being posted here, I was in Cairo, Egypt, and was there during the historical event of the overthrow of then President Hosni Mubarak, in 2011, which unfortunately resulted in the evacuation of family and friends. Egypt is a country I truly loved. The people I met there and worked with are one of a kind—so helpful and generous, even though they don't have much. I am now in Qatar—a totally different experience. It has just been named the number one safest country in these parts. Let's hope it stays that way.

My son, Cole Vinson Lundby, is 15 and has had a grand adventure. Overseas schools are incredible. He has been to Cairo, helped build a playground at a school in Sri



Michelle with her son, Cole.

Lanka, and is currently in Qatar. I decided to go overseas thinking that my son needed to see the real world, not the electronic world and to grow as a positive, active, global citizen. This year he will go on a service trip to either Tanzania or Ethiopia.



Elizabeth Heredia, Class of 2008, is serving in Panama with the Peace Corps as an environmentalist. Elizabeth sends updates every few weeks and they are all interesting. Here is an excerpt from her Sept. 14 letter:

My host family took me into the mountains to their coffee farm in a place called Zapillo. The hike is only about 3 hours, but they insisted I ride a horse. And so, in keeping with my "never say no" policy, I agreed to my first horseback riding experience. I held on for dear life as we crossed rivers and

passed over rocky, steep terrain until we arrived at a small community buried deep in the mountains...

On July 24th, my boss, Francisco, came to see me about the upcoming "Community Analysis Meeting." The week leading up to it, I walked to every house in the community (100 homes) delivering invitations in person, and stressing that the presence of every individual at the meeting was important.

When Francisco stood up to speak at the meeting, he said that the attendance—50 plus adults—was the highest he had seen at a Peace Corps meeting in Ojo de Agua achieved solely through the 'fuerza de la voluntad,' (my effort). Hearing those words and looking around at people smiling at me, I had to hold back the tears. It was at that moment that I really felt like an accepted part of the community, and knew that the people had come to support me because they consider me a friend, or at least recognize and respect my work. I thought to myself, these people are my people, and I felt proud of that fact."

And this from October 12, after Elizabeth returned from a 3 day meeting with other PC volunteers:

During my first few days back, some conversations alone reminded me of why I have come to love Panama, bizarre as it can be at times. Here's a true example and a bit of colloquial Spanish too (for when you all visit me, of course!)

Literal (Translated) Conversations in Ojo de Agua

Me: Goods (Buenas is commonly used in place of Buenos Dias or Buenas Tardes)
Neighbor: Ah, goods. Goods goods goods!
Me: How are you?
Neighbor: Here....and you? You were lost! Days without seeing you! We were very worried for you—thought you already went back to the States.
Me: No, no! I told you I was going to my training, remember? I said I would return.
Neighbor: Good, well we almost sold all your things!
Me: Aye the life!

La Reina Named A 2013 National Blue Ribbon School

La Reina has been named a 2013 National Blue Ribbon School by the United States Department of Education. **La Reina is one of only two high schools in California** and one of only 53 nationwide to receive this award, which is the highest honor an American school can receive.

Facts about the Blue Ribbon program:

- 1982: Program began during Ronald Reagan's presidency.
- 2003: Criteria changed for eligibility. Schools must score in the top 15% of the nation in both reading and math on a nationally normed test. Ninety percent of the class must have taken the test. Because we are both a junior high and a high school, we had to meet the test criteria for both groups: Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores were submitted for the junior high; SAT scores, for the high school.
- Non-public schools must first submit their application to the Council for American Private Education (CAPE), which can select no more than 50 non-public schools to be considered for the national award. La Reina is one of only three private high schools in the nation to receive the award this year.

Becoming a Blue Ribbon School is about more than high test scores. The application asks what sets your school apart, what are its strengths and its accomplishments.

Applying for this award helped us to look at our beginnings and to see where they led...

- One order of sisters brought their dream of a quality Catholic education for young women from Coesfeld, Germany to Thousand Oaks, California.
- One person won a CIF track championship, placing first in four events.
- One person introduced the schoolwide writing program.
- One person started the award winning Mock Trial team.
- One person began traditions like Friendship Week and the Renaissance Festival.



Teachers Emily Robbins Beutner '04 and Robin Fontana serve cake to eager students: Katherine Leap '19, Sydney Todd '18, Amanda Jones '18, and Nicole Zagari '18.

Yet, it was the commitment and cooperation of many leaders, teachers, students and parents that embraced the innovations that have led to our success:

That first CIF championship attracted quality athletes and coaches to the school. Before long, CIF and league championships became part of our legacy.

The writing program was embraced by teachers schoolwide—and within a few years, SAT and AP scores skyrocketed.

The dedication of volunteer coaches, faculty advisors and hundreds of students have led the Mock Trial teams to 18 county, four state and two Empire State championships.

In 1964, the Sisters of Notre Dame opened their doors to 22 students. Today that number is 560. In 1964, La Reina had two buildings. Today, it has five and the school has launched a Comprehensive Campaign to add another. In 1964, students put on plays in a large classroom with a makeshift stage; today they have a black box theater and space dedicated exclusively to the performing arts.

In 1964, students watched film loops in class; today they carry an iPad.

Buildings and programs have changed over the years, but the commitment of the Sisters of Notre Dame to provide a transformative education for young women in the Conejo Valley has not.

IN MEMORIAM



Astrid Mittenthal, Class of 1990.

Esther Querciagrossa, mother of Susan Querciagrossa Stewart, Class of 1971.

Irene Graham, Class of 1969.

Judy Miller, mother of Jennifer Miller Schwartzman, Class of 1989.

Vernon Cluke, father of Vernessa Cluke, Class of 2000.

Clarence Radford, father of Nicole Radford, Class of 1987 and Alycia Radford Lee, Class of 1983.

Donna Howard, mother of Alison Howard, Class of 1999.



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*We are Celebrating our
50th Anniversary in 2014!
Reunion Weekend Sept. 5- 7, 2014*



The Hopcus Sisters: Dona '81, Tracy '91 and Teresa '77

Come one, come all!! We will begin our celebration in January 2014
and we will hold events all year! Stay Tuned!

It's also an important year for all classes whose year ends in a 4 or a 9.
Combine your reunion with our 50th!!!

Check www.lareina.com often for updated information or
contact Alumnae Director, Betsy Potts at 805.495.6494 Ext. 353
or email <bpotts@lareina.com>.