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## Editor's Introduction to the 27th Issue

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## Editor's Introduction to the 27<sup>th</sup> Issue

The College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University are ranked No. 1 nationally among baccalaureate institutions with students who participate in mid-length — from one quarter to a full semester — study-abroad programs, according to *Open Doors 2010*, the annual report on international education published by the Institute of International Education (IIE). During the 2008–09 academic year CSB|SJU had about 400 students studying abroad in mid-length programs.

Overall, CSB|SJU ranked No. 5 nationally among baccalaureate institutions for the total number of study-abroad students, with 550 students participating in the colleges' international programs in 2008–09.

In addition to dozens of short-term and service-learning overseas trips, CSB|SJU offers 17 semester-long study-abroad programs in 14 countries on six continents. Fifty-eight percent of CSB students and 41 percent of SJU students from the graduating class of 2009 studied abroad.

This year's *Headwaters* cover features a photograph of the Triton Fountain with the cathedral in the background in the Old Town of Salzburg, by **Stuart Goldschen**, assistant director of the 2010 study-abroad program in Austria.

The cover photograph, "Salzburg Splendor," sets the tone for the lead article in this year's issue, "Oberammergau: Germany's 376-year-old Passion Play Before and After the Holocaust, Vatican II, and Ongoing Research into Early Christianity" by **Anna Lisa Ohm**.

The international theme is echoed in **Sophia Geng's** short story "The Honest Village," a tribute to ordinary Chinese villagers' resilience in confronting the modern challenges of urbanization and globalization.

The global journey continues with a multi-authored chronicle, compiled by **Ernie Diedrich**, of a faculty visit to Guatemala in May 2009 led by **Eleonora Bertranou**, that included the city of Quetzaltenango, site for one of CSB|SJU's semester-long study-abroad programs. "A Week in Guatemala: Assorted Mental Souvenirs" includes contributions by Ernie Diedrich, Eleonora Bertranou, Bruce Campbell, Nelsy Echavez-Solano, Alexis Howe, Michael Livingston, Elena Sanchez-Mora, and Corey Shouse-Tourino, with photography by Cheri Supalla and Joy Hemmesch.

We are fortunate that our international programs have thrived, despite the greatest global economic crisis since the Great Depression. **Steven Thomas's** poem "The Love Song of J. Lender Truetown" was written at the height of the recent subprime mortgage credit crisis, with apologies to T. S. Eliot.

"We only begin to live," wrote William Butler Yeats, "when we conceive of life as tragedy." Those words — though offering cold comfort for Americans hit by home foreclosure in our Great Recession — set the stage for "Consolation" by **Tony Cunningham** in the first of two essays in the current issue dealing with moral philosophy. If it were "possible to live true to what is really important, either because you can have everything that matters or because you can at least have what matters most," writes Cunningham, "consolation would never be beyond us" because "no matter what we might lose or miss in life, we could always have the comfort of living true to what is most important." The crucial question is whether tragedy denies us such comfort.

Continuing the exploration of moral philosophy, **Chuck Wright**, in "A Moral Paradox of Martial Training," examines the tension between the moral aspirations of martial discipline and the failings of many advanced practitioners of the martial arts in whom proficiency often fosters egocentrism.

In his convocation address to the Saint John's class of 2013, titled "Reasonable Doubt," 2009 Robert L. Spaeth Teacher of Distinction Award winner **Tom Sibley** reflects on his deepening appreciation for the value of group discussion — a hallmark of the CSB|SJU educational experience — gained while performing jury duty. "A group of non-experts deliberating about an important issue" can make sound decisions, writes Sibley, even though conclusions may lack the certainty he demands in a mathematical proof.

Sister Mary Grell Teacher of Distinction Award winner in 2009, **Cindy Malone**, elaborates on the value of a liberal arts education in "Clover, Bee, and Reverie." "Here," Malone notes in her convocation address to the Saint Ben's class of 2013, "you're ... learning from many disciplines, listening well to all conversations, taking all seriousness seriously, never looking down upon anything or anyone as not worthy of notice, and by reading."

In "Analysis of Saint John's Maple Syrup Records: 1942–2009," **Steve Saupe** — though not the central purpose of his essay — touches on another aspect of the CSB|SJU experience: the rural, Catholic, Benedictine heritage epitomized by the annual ritual of the maple syrup harvest.

Following an interlude of poetry by **Sandy Bot-Miller** and **Will Marwitz**, the focus shifts to current issues of national and international importance in historical perspective.

In “What Kind of Constitution? James Madison, John C. Calhoun, and the Problem of Majority Rule,” **Jim Read** provides historical context for today’s divisive political climate and clashing policy debates on important domestic issues.

The current issue of *Headwaters* concludes with “The Blessings and Burdens of Liberty,” **James Fischer**’s tribute to those who have sacrificed for all of us to live in freedom.

Of liberty I would say that, in the whole plenitude of its extent, it is unobstructed action according to our will. But rightful liberty is unobstructed action according to our will within limits drawn around us by the equal rights of others. I do not add “within the limits of the law” because law is often but the tyrant’s will, and always so when it violates the rights of the individual.

— Thomas Jefferson, letter to Isaac H. Tiffany, April 4, 1819