

Sometimes II

A letter, signed by Fr. Neal, was sent to St. Catherine's leadership community; the presidents of the different service clubs, and the school, the schools of Religious Education encouraging them to write letters to the Planning Commission. PACE had been advised that it would be prudent to have no more than five speakers. A speaker training was held on February 20 to make sure those five would not all be saying the same thing. It was also planned that each group would don its identifying garb like hats, t-shirts, and aprons; and with the kids in their uniforms. The groups were also asked to bring their banners and flags. Announcements were made in church asking everyone to attend to show the sheer size of our community, but, we were reminded, above all things to be polite to those who spoke out in opposition. And we knew there would be opposition.

At the Planning Commission meeting we presented a carefully crafted five-page letter of request along with some letters of support we had sought from community leaders. The presentation was opened by PACE committee member Mitch Avalon, Ken Watson was there from Paul Kelly's office as was Carolyn Cole from the Crane Transportation Group. We knew that if there was too much opposition from the neighbors the building would not be constructed. We had made some concessions to offer the City Planners that had been suggested by Corey Simons and Dina Tasini; 1.) That we put out a letter each year to the school parents reminding them of the drop-off rules; 2.) We have a parking monitor for large group gatherings, and; 3.) That we would provide a letter each year to comply with our Conditional Use Permit, the permit that would give the City a form of redress if we failed to comply with what we had agreed.

PACE had already worked out a reciprocal agreement with the Boys and Girls Club where we agreed to check our annual calendar against their annual calendar so as to not have any parking conflicts. That night a number of people spoke in opposition and Planning Commissioner, AnaMarie Avila, a parishioner, recused herself from the vote because of a conflict of interest. The final decision was postponed to March 8, 2005.

Here are the minutes from the March 7, 2005 PACE meeting

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM with the single intention of planning the approach to the Planning Commission Meeting for Tuesday, March 8, 2003. Bob Osmond noted that Mitch Avalon had done a very good presentation at the Feb 22 Planning Commission meeting and thanked him for his hard work.

Mitch presented a flyer that was created by (a neighbor) and delivered to the neighborhood. He went over the flyer item by item and answered each accusation. He said there are other issues of opposition that came up on the 22nd that he will also address. Bob Osmond asked if he was going to address the Committee or wait to answer questions. Mitch said he plans to address them up front.

Topics included tree removal, parking and drainage. Diana Palmer said that if we were going to open the upper yard for parking for City events we will need to screen off the play structure. Mitch Avalon suggested the City could move the Play Structure to Susana Park. Frank Hall noted that Mike Telfer would have to take the lead on this because they had donated the Play Structure in memory of their daughter.

Mitch intends to propose a plan to establish a process where the neighbors help create a traffic solution. Frank Hall noted that the school is getting a new Principal and Bob Osmond pointed out the school traffic issue is totally disassociated with our project.

Diana Palmer asked if we were taking part of Susana Park for the knuckle the Design Review Committee required. Mitch Avalon said the City owns both the park and the street and they are giving 204 square feet of Park to the knuckle. We are giving up nine parking spaces and 2,660 feet, more than 13 times what the City is donating, for the knuckle.

Frank Hall said his sense is the City staff is supportive of our project but that we have to get all of these issues on the record for the Appeal to the City Council. Sandra Hall asked if we can bring anything new to the Appeal and was told that we could only respond.

There was general discussion for mitigating the parking problem. Frank Hall introduced the idea of Park & Walk. He has been talking to parishioners one-by-one and convincing them to park on Alhambra. Mitch Avalon asked if Carolyn Cole, from Crane Transportation, was going to be present at the March 8 meeting and was told yes. Diana Palmer asked about the accusation that our Parking and Traffic Consultant had a conflict of interest. Mitch Avalon said that (a neighbor) stated the traffic study was not an independent study because we hired and paid Crane and they worked at our behest.

Frank Hall said Crane gave the City a draft RFP to review. The City made some changes before it was finalized and could have required that we pay for a peer review. They didn't. He said that Commissioner Wheeler said the Parking Study is, "Not an issue."

Commissioner Burt had inquired about acoustics at the Feb 22 meeting. Frank Hall said that Ken Watson, of Paul Kelly's office had run our design by an acoustical engineer and was told he could, "Make it work." Frank added that an acoustical study is a requirement of the Diocese.

Frank Hall read a Letter of Understanding between St. Catherine's and the Boys and Girls Club. He noted that the two entities are in the same business of doing good and if we can't make this agreement work then shame on us. He said the Boys and Girls Club lawyer, Ginnochio and Angelo Costanza from St. Catherine's had helped with the letter.

Nobody on the PACE Committee knew if the two Commissioners who had been asked to recuse themselves would be sitting at the March 8 meeting. Frank Hall said the Commissioners will have read the favorable Staff report and he hoped that we would have a transcription of the first four speakers and Kathy O'Connell's speech for the March 8 meeting. Mitch Avalon will do most of the presentation and said that too many speakers can become counter-productive. He added there should be no applause after each speaker. He said Commissioner Burt was only being polite when she allowed applause on Feb 22.

Sandra Hall said that (the neighbor from across the creek) might show up and that she is an accomplished speaker. Mitch Avalon said that if she can see the hills over the 30' trees she will still be able to see them over our building. Bob Osmond said the only issue is parking and Frank Hall reminded Mitch that we cannot cut down the size of the building.

Mitch Avalon said that they will close the public hearing but we can stay to listen. They will address questions to Mitch Avalon as our spokesperson. He said they can approve it right then, they can wait with their decision, they can tweak the plan a little and they can add conditions of approval. As an example, they could insist that we replace an existing tree. They could add the condition that we re-align the sidewalk around the existing tree and create a meandering path. They could send us back to Design Review. Angel Rubio said he doesn't think we will do any harm to the tree. Then general discussion regarding sidewalks ensued.

Final comments were regarding opening the upper yard for Tue night's meeting. The PACE Committee then went to the Parish Council meeting to share the discussion. Sandra Hall displayed white boards with signatures from all of the weekend's masses.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45PM.

Back on February 16 we had received a letter telling us the Diocese approved of our plans with only a few exceptions. Here is an excerpt from a letter to the PACE Committee from Sandra Hall:

This is an exciting time in our building project. First, the good news; the Diocese has approved our plans, but with some caveats. Because of the input we have received from Rich Vila and from Paul Kelly none of their concerns came as a surprise. One concern was that we install a low maintenance floor rather than wood. This was first suggested from the Youth Group at one of our early Parish meetings as a cost cutting measure.

Secondly, the Diocese wanted assurance that Rich Vila will be our contractor. Fr. Neal was asked if Rich had been selected and Fr Neal confirmed that he had. Their final concern was that we understand that we are required to pay Union and/or prevailing wages. This was something that Rich had informed us of long ago.

Also behind the scenes during this time there was permit work being researched and completed by the PACE committee members. A PACE Kitchen Team was formed to visit a synagogue in Danville which had been designed by Paul Kelly's firm. PACE Committee volunteers were visiting other facilities and researching rental agreements which had to be crafted in advance of getting our building permit.

On March 10, 2005, the Martinez Gazette reported in its headline, "St. Catherine's gets green light to build parish center." The Contra Costa Times Pleasant Hill/Martinez Record ran an article with the headline, "St. Catherine's gets OK for gym." But in a letter to PACE Committee members in March 21, Sandra Hall said that we still did not have our Use Permit. At the 11th hour a neighbor wrote a letter appealing the Planning Commission's vote and asking for more concessions even though all the issues had already been addressed. The City Council would be addressing our issue at their meeting on April 20.

Meanwhile we went forward with plans for a construction meeting on April 22 and continued to work towards a second pledge drive. E. Paul Kelly's notes from that meeting show that the "design build" concept was discussed. Kelly's contract included the design for: structural engineering, civil engineering, the landscape architect and an acoustic consultant. Design build contractors provided by Vila included: heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC), plumbing, fire protections (sprinklers and hydrant), and electrical work (power, lighting and fire alarm). PACE would be responsible for a kitchen consultant, security and communication and data. Angel Rubio would be working as our landscape consultant to advice about native plants along the creek. It was time to contact P. G. & E., Martinez Water and Central San.

Frank and Sandra Hall asked to step down as leaders in the second pledge drive. There had been a series of sub-committee meetings with parish volunteers giving their input about the second drive. PACE chose Walsh & Associates to run the second campaign based on the success of the first. Alan and Katherine Hern were asked to head up the new pledge drive.

On March 23 St. Catherine's sent a letter to the City of Martinez Planning Department clarifying that construction work would not take place on weekends until the building was *buttoned up*. After that, we agreed to work from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Saturdays but not on Sundays. Meanwhile Martinez Senior Planner Corey Simons was requesting detailed information about the proposed parking lot lighting; showing the *neighborhood-friendly* nature of the light fixtures. In April the city asked the Geotechnical Engineer to review the structural engineer's design and write a letter to the Building Department stating that the design was in compliance with the recommendations in the soils report.

In the spring of 2006 PACE volunteers put on a concert by the Notre Dame Glee Club. St. Catherine's 2001 graduate, Robby Rusca, was a freshman at Notre Dame and asked if he could bring the Glee Club Concert here as his contribution to PACE. Fr. Brian Joyce of Christ the King offered the use of his church and St. Catherine's volunteer, Mary Cook, found parish host families for over sixty musicians. We were told that our concert was one of the best attended to date.

Throughout the planning process we have been offered building material, which would be a huge savings for us, such as cement and rebar. Rich Vila pointed out two caveats with these kinds of gifts; 1.) That we would have to ask our donors to hold on to that material for an indefinite time because we didn't have a target date for construction, and 2.) Vila Construction would have to oversee the quality of the material, using only the best. **However, gifts of construction material have not been ruled out as cost savers.**

In May of 2006 we heard back from the Diocese attorney, Jim McCann, who was working on the draft of the parking agreement. He was drafting a document that would be acceptable to the City of Martinez and would be attached to our Conditional Use Permit.

Building plans were handed out to all the experts for Plan Checks. The drawings were found to be solid workmanship. Our plans were ready to go.

We had our first pre-construction meeting in August of 2006. On August 24, 2006, we had, on hand, a cash balance from the PACE I Campaign of \$658,875.59, a cash balance, on hand, of \$256,186.45 and \$13,248.00 (gross) from the Notre Dame Glee Club Concert. The total pledges from the PACE II Campaign, was \$734,190.60 which included bequests for \$25,000 and “in kind” value of \$18,500. Not included was a Soda Foundation \$75,000 Grant which had been procured by Sandra Hall, but would not be made available until construction was actually underway. **In our original PACE I drive we were told we would be lucky if we raised \$800,000 and we raised just over a million. In PACE 2 the volunteers raised almost the same amount we were striving for in 1999.** St. Catherine’s was becoming known as *the little church that could*.

In September of 2006 Frank and Sandra Hall met with Mike Canizzaro, the CFO of the Oakland Diocese. They were told that St. Catherine’s needed to raise an additional 2.5 million dollars in pledges before the diocese would lend us the money. How could this have happened? Trying to keep up with construction costs was like trying to fill a bucket with a hole in the bottom. If we could have started building at the outset our project would have costs just over a million dollars, but we didn’t know then whether or not we could even legally build on the site. Around this time we shortened the PACE prayer so it could be recited at each of our weekend Masses.

In December of 2006 the total expenses were published in the church bulletin:

Total pledges both campaigns	\$1,754,650.80
Total collected to date from both campaigns	\$1,290,764.37

Expenses to date:

Phase I, Ministry Center	\$ 29,720.07
Architect	\$294,742.82
Costs of both campaigns	\$138,522.66
Permits and fees	\$ 84,817.10

Balance in savings account including interest:	\$ 983,856.58
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We were accruing about \$50,000 a year in interest alone.

In February of 2007 Paul Kelly wrote to Fr. Neal pointing out that the Conditional Use Permit was about to expire on March 8, 2007. On March 7, Andrew von Haunalter, the school Principal received and forwarded to Fr. Neal and Sandra Hall, an email from Albert Lopez of the City of Martinez. Mr. Lopez explained that something had to happen immediately. Either Rich Vila had to come in immediately, with proof of insurance, and get the Building Permit, or, we would have had to apply for a planning extension and face the public hearing process again. The school was starting to build the pre-school in the Ministry Center and we believed that the neighbors, who almost stopped the building, would be up-in-arms again over the pre-school project. So, the decision was to get our Building Permit immediately. Failing to do so could have potentially squandered all of our hard work to date as well as over half a million dollars in development costs. The City of Martinez gave us a one-day grace period to accommodate Fr. Neal's day off. He then signed a check in the amount of \$17,397.15 and we finally had our Building Permit.

No PACE money was spent on the creating and building of the preschool in the Ministry Center. It also needs to be mentioned that it was parishioner Tim McLoughlin who created that lovely space for toddlers in a major remodel. If you haven't yet seen the pre-school you'll be in for a pleasant surprise.

Deacon Albert took over as the Parish Administrator in September of 2007 after Fr. Neal left. One of the first things Deacon Albert did was to invite PACE representatives to attend a meeting of the Parish Council. Parish Councilwoman, AnaMarie Avila Farias had expressed an interest in PACE and asked Deacon Albert if she could get on board to help us in any way. AnaMarie reviewed PACE documents and finances to prepare for the joint meeting on October 4, 2007.

Like many of our other volunteers AnaMarie brought a fresh perspective, her talents and her education to PACE. Her plan was to create a feasibility study and a cost analysis, that is, to estimate what our exact costs would be and to discern what we could expect as income from the building. The idea was to go to the Diocese with a workable figure rather than having the Diocese telling us what we had to raise in pledges. Until this time the goal, set by the Diocese, had been a moving target. Something that most parishioners didn't realize is that the Diocese is the bank. St. Catherine's couldn't go to an outside lender because we didn't own the land; it belonged to the Diocese. But, the other important use of a cost analysis and feasibility study was that potential grantors would ask for the kind of information that such a study would garner.

AnaMarie Avila, Deacon Albert Dizon and Frank and Sandra Hall met with Mike Canizzaro at the Diocese on October 30, 2007. The CFO said that, in the opinion of the Diocese, our campaign was failing because we had not yet brought in enough pledges. He again explained that we needed to have half the costs on hand and the other half in pledges before the Diocese would give us our construction loan. He commended us for using the professional fund raising company and strongly suggested that we hire another professional who might help us with different funding strategies. He also suggested partnering with the City of Martinez who might recognize that there is no other building like this in our town and who might see the benefit of sharing the use of the building with us. Canizzaro cited the relationship between the City of Walnut Creek and the Jewish Community Center as an example. We came from that meeting frustrated but also inspired to find other ways to raise funds outside of the St. Catherine's family. As of August 26, 2007, we had a total of \$1,066,752.60, which included \$22,729.60 in interest.

In November the same four people met with the interim City Manager, Don Blubaugh, as well as Assistant City Manager and Community Development Director, Karen Majors. The meeting was very fruitful. Not that there was any partnership possibility but that we were given the gift of time. We were told there were no foreseeable problems with extending our Building Permit.

The Parish Activity Center Extension or PACE activity is always going on behind the scenes. Right now we are in the process of an internal audit and we are also working on our business plan. The structure of the PACE committee has been changed in order to create a larger Team of people with expertise and connections who could be called forth when needed. The restructuring will also make it more workable, with a smaller decision making group, as had been originally set forth by Fr. Vincent. A larger group, now called the PACE Team, will be informed and therefore able to inform even more people of PACE activities.

After being advised by the Diocese to hire a professional consultant, PACE has hired the firm VenueTech out of Lafayette. The owner, Mr. John Lynde, has worked for years finding alternative funding for non-profits. John Lynde is also in the building management business so he will help to predict what we can expect for income and expenses once the building is up and running. One of his first requests was to meet with PACE Team member, Vince Romeo, the Director of CYO. Outside of the school use, CYO will be the 2nd biggest user of the premises. We needed to get a clear picture of how their use will affect our income and, after that, every other potential user will be assessed. Lynde then met with Sandra Hall and PACE Team members Diana Palmer and Rita Thomas to start an internal audit of PACE finances.

An internal audit was important in order to draft Grant Proposals. Also, the intent is to return to the Diocese with our business plan with perfect records. The first pledge drive was posted in the old DOS computer program so a spread sheet, combining the two campaigns, needed to be created and parish volunteer, Esther Conception took on that task. Rich Vila provided a new building cost analysis. The finalized business plan can be viewed on the parish web page www.stcmtz.org under the heading *Articles of Interest*.

Once we had the business plan in place, the records cleaned up, and, a new cost analysis it was time to hire a professional Grant Proposal writer. PACE chose Bob Penkivich, a former parishioner who had moved away from Martinez. It would have been impossible to hire Bob at the beginning of this entire process because we wouldn't have had all the information needed to fill out grant proposals and the internet wasn't yet sophisticated enough to handle a long-distance business relationship. Once again, through the Grace of God, everything fell into place.

Bob met with PACE workers, Frank and Sandra Hall, Diana Palmer and Rita Thomas and got right to work. It was decided to first approach the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation and shoot for the moon. Frank Hall knew that the Valley Foundation was closing its doors in 2014 and therefore giving larger grants in new areas in order to deplete its funds. Our Grant Proposal was submitted in June, 2010. In August a site visit was arranged with the Valley Foundation Executive Director, Mike Desler and members of the PACE Team who were told that the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation Board would be meeting on September 15 and that we would hear after that date.

On September 30, 2010, Sandra Hall sent the following email to the PACE Team:

Dear PACE Team:

We have received a grant from the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation in the amount of \$725,000. This is an incredibly generous gift. I want to sincerely thank our former parishioner, Bob Penkivich, for his amazing Grant Proposal writing. I also want to thank Fr. Leo and Deacon Albert for their prayer support at the Masses. It is prayer that keeps this in the front of our minds and prayer that makes it possible.

There are members of our Parish family, school and church, who have not yet pledged and the time has come to collect those pledges. We need \$1,000 times 1,000, or one million dollars to break ground. A \$1,000 pledge over five years comes down to \$200 per year, or \$3.85 per week. I am seeking volunteers to collect pledges after Masses and at the school at some near future dates yet to be determined.

We will also be seeking other grants, but we cannot bank on those and only pledges will satisfy the Diocese requirements. For the Diocese we don't need cash in hand for a go-ahead, just pledges.

It's time for a great last push. The time to build is now while building costs are down and I'm aiming for an April, 2011, groundbreaking. Please let me know if you'll be able to help collect pledges and we will arrange an instructional meeting. I'm pretty sure that PACE work counts as volunteer hours.

I'm attaching the letter we received from the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation.

Sincerely,

Sandra Hall
PACE Financial Co-Chair

Dear Fr. Ascuncion:

The Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation is pleased to inform you that its Board of Directors has approved a Grant of \$725,000 to Saint Catherine of Siena Parish. In response to your letter of May 27,2010 and updates of July 9 and July 15, 2010, this Grant is to be used in support of the Parish Activity Center Expansion (PACE) project.

Enclosed are two originals of the Grant Agreement which need to be executed by Sandra King Hall, Co-Chair of the PACE Campaign, and you. Please keep one for your files, and return the other to us. We will be able to fund the Grant to you upon your written request and notification that the conditions in paragraph 2 of the Grant Agreement have been met. Please note that the conditions include raising the balance of the approximate \$3,300,000 construction costs and related soft costs. We estimate, based on the information you have shared with us, that approximately \$1,000,000 still needs to be raised in gifts and pledges in addition to our Grant.

In any correspondence, newsletter or other authorized announcement about this Grant, will you please refer to this Foundation by its full name, the Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation. Also, please reference this Grant by the Grant # 10-048 in all future correspondence to us.

Best wishes on the success of your capital campaign. We look forward to receiving future reports on its progress.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Desler
Executive Director,
Wayne and Gladys Valley Foundation

THIS IS SUCH AN AMAZING GRANT! As of October 1, 2010 we need only \$1,000,000 to start our project. We need to satisfy the Diocese requirements of having either cash or pledges in that amount and this can be done. We continue to seek those pledges and we continue to seek more Grant monies.

It would have been nice if we could have had this backward look at the beginning of our project, but it might have been too discouraging to even start. So many things could have stopped us completely. We might not have been able to merge our two lots. Our property might have been incompatible with flood concerns. If the dirt had been unstable we might have failed the soils analysis. If the neighbors in opposition had been more

numerous and if we hadn't got our parking variance we would have been brought to an abrupt stop. We could have been stopped by the Diocese, the City, the County, the Fire Marshall or the Health Department anywhere along the process, but we weren't. The huge amount of money we have received in pledges is unbelievable enough to be miraculous. The same can be said for the grant money that will come our way. I believe this has been a result of our continual prayers. Fr. Leo says we can't get dollars without pennies. We continue to receive contributions, either through pledges or prayer.

Our balance in the Diocese PACE account is \$1,350,941.53 as of September 30, 2010.

Our Pledge Drive totals at this time are as follows:

Total pledged:	\$706,618.21
Total paid:	\$506,589.70 (pledged families)
	\$517,660.45 (includes donations from non-pledged families or "Loose" collections)
Total non-cash:	\$18,515.00 (Bequests & In Kind)
Total balance:	\$183,248.29 (balance due on pledges)
Total gifts:	\$13,508.00 (this figure is <u>not</u> included in the Total paid)

We have a whole box of blank Pledge Cards and are seeking volunteers to call on un-pledged Parishioners

Respectfully submitted, Sandra Hall, PACE Financial Co-Chair