



# Midwest . . . NEWS NOTES

BROTHERS of HOLY CROSS - NOTRE DAME, INDIANA 46556

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## OF BROTHER RICHARD WEBER

"He's not Santa Claus, but anyone would have a hard time convincing the parents of the handicapped children who have been helped by his handiwork that he is not." This is a lead sentence from an article (by Kathleen Sechowski), plus three pictures, that filled the front page of "Living Today," a section of the South Bend Tribune, in its Christmas Eve edition.

Only a few can claim "hobbies" which do as much good (perhaps more good from some viewpoints) as their regularly assigned work. But few have been gifted with such a variety of talents and interests as Brother Richard Weber, who will be celebrating twenty-five years of service in Holy Cross come the 26th of this month. Service. How well that word, in all of its dimensions, applies to the life and work of Brother Richard.

Born in Cleveland, Richard attended St. Ignatius elementary school, was graduated from St. Edward High School in 1955, and came to Watertown in the fall of that year.... During the first few years of its existence, Holy Cross in River Grove depended upon Richard to solve its mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and other building problems. When the Brothers' Center, with its six to ten buildings (depending upon how you count them) opened in 1966, its maintenance life became Brother Richard's principal responsibility - and has remained so until now.

He is currently at work on a 2 ft. Rubiks cube, one of his gargoyles atop the Center garage spouts water when provoked, his fireplace in the second floor lounge at Basil creates warmth for conversation - especially on winter weekend evenings, his great grandfather clock in the main lounge is much more regular than most of us. His electrical expertise extends from automobile systems through electrical heating systems to malfunctioning street lights. He is on call for leaks in ceilings to leaks in washing machines. He collects stamps and pennies, is an amateur pilot, and works with waterbeds.

He started applying his skills to the needs of the handicapped when Brother Flavius began the work of caring for such children at Corvillia in South Bend. This work is symbolic of Brother Richard's interest in children with serious handicaps. He says "I have become mostly involved with children in wheelchairs. They need the equipment more. Some cannot walk or talk but they have their own personalities that can get inside you." Richard found that working with the children as persons was integral to the work he could do in customizing wheel chairs and other mechanical equipment designed to assist them. "The main objective of most of the equipment is to get the

children to sit up. They can't do anything when they're stretched out." The result has been individualized wheelchairs, strollers, posture chairs, standup tables, slides, scooterboards, and even waterbeds. Numerous local and state organizations have cited him for his work at the Northern Indiana State Childrens' Hospital.

Richard's priority list is easily formed. It is usually dictated by the wheels squeaking loudest for oil. And of this there is literally no end. Fortunately there seems to be no end, either, to his talent and ability, and his willingness to do those things he is requested to take care of. As a community there are few of us who have not benefitted from his constant service. Ad multos annos, Richard.

#### OF BROTHER RALPH BAIRD

(Ed. note: Brother Ralph is forty-three years old and next August will celebrate twenty-five years in Holy Cross. Since nearly two-thirds of those years have been in what is now Bangladesh, many of us who have spent our lives in the states may not know him very well. I had the pleasure of sharing his first teaching assignment with him in Akron in 1960. Since he told me to do with his letter "whatever I wanted" I have taken the liberty of leaving it in the first person. It's better that way.)

"You're from Boyssville? Isn't that a delinquent home?" These were the first words of welcome spoken to me when I came with Brother Gregoire to Watertown. My only answer at that time was, "It was either go to prison or become a Brother, so here I am!" But I thank God for Gregoire's "kidnapping" me to Holy Cross.

I was born June 20, 1938 in Detroit, ninth of the ten children of Harold and Anna Baird. My mother died when I was eight and my father followed her eight months later. My two brothers and I were sent to St. Francis Home, a military orphanage in Detroit operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Nazareth. For five years I marched, drilled, and got a large experience of community living. I enjoyed those years and can now see how they prepared me for the work I'm doing now. After St. Francis I was assigned to Boyssville of Michigan where I met the Brothers of Holy Cross. As I look back I see how God looks after those in need. The seed of a vocation is God's gift and our work is to cultivate and nurture the seed to full growth. The lives of the Brothers at Boyssville impressed me very much. The dedication and love they gave to all nurtured the seed of God's calling in me. It was not just one brother's inspiring me, but all of them. I asked for information about becoming a Brother and much to my surprise they encouraged me to pray and finally everything was prepared for my going to Watertown in June after graduation.

After Watertown and the novitiate I went to Texas for my scholasticate. My first assignment came to me as I was cleaning shrimp at Waveland summer camp. I never had a chance to enjoy the shrimp because I had only three days to get to Akron. After one year I was assigned to St. Ed's in Lakewood, and a year later to a brand new school not yet finished in River Grove. We had lots of mud and lots of work, but we all worked together to build a good

community. I am really grateful to Brother Walter Davenport for his guidance, help, and direction during my two years at the Grove.

In the summer of 1964 I was shocked to read on the obedience list that I had been assigned to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). It took me a year to get to East Pakistan - after two departure ceremonies and many "going away" parties. Everywhere I went people always asked, "Are you still here?" Finally I arrived at Dacca to begin a different apostolate in Holy Cross.

I can see now how God prepared me for the work of the missions. Life here is quite different but still Holy Cross. Over here we have close ties with all the Holy Cross societies. I like the life here and look forward to many more years of working in Holy Cross to bring Christ to the world. I am thankful to many Brothers for their love and concern for me during my early life in Holy Cross. I thank God and the community for accepting me (even though I came from Boysville). Ad multos annos.

## BITS AND PIECES FROM HERE AND THERE

Mid-December brought the first (that we have seen) of the Principal's Newsletter from Brother James Bluma, Evansville Memorial. Included in the news was a citation from the City Council to the school and soccer team on the occasion of winning the state championship for the third consecutive year.

As we wrote this we learned of meetings (of area religious) scheduled at Columba Hall (7th) and the Brothers' Center (11th) to discuss Bishop William McManus' New Year's Letter: "Peace be with you." (In the letter the Bishop invited response, offered a free "peace newsletter" six times a year, and inquired about interest in a three hour peace seminar on a Saturday afternoon).

Mr. Glenn Rousey, Principal of South Bend St. Joseph High School, spent most of the holidays in the hospital following surgery on December 22. He hoped to be back in the office when classes resumed on January 4.

Brother William Mewes (as official representative of the Holy Cross Interprovince Justice and Peace Group) attended the National Committee meeting of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, The Call to Halt the Nuclear Arms Race. The meeting was held in mid-December in Saint Louis and was warmly received by the religious community there, especially Catholics.

A statement of concern, expressing strong opposition to the present nuclear weapon proliferation, has been signed by many members of the faculty of King's College, including Brothers Just Paczesny and Frederick Raehsler.

FROM DUJARIE HOUSE

Highlight of the last month, indeed, of the year, was the annual Christmas party which began with an elegant buffet around 12:30. Our head chef, Mr. Ron Ori had prepared the meat and dessert, while the nursing staff, organized by Mrs. Shirley Rasmussen prepared everything else and assisted in the serving. She also had written Bishop McManus suggesting it would be a great thing if he stopped by. He came about 1:15 and spent half an hour meeting and conversing with everyone and enjoying the musical entertainment. Brother Jeffrey Michels had purchased and wrapped presents for each of the Brothers and these were presented by Santa Claus (Brother Simon Murren) after the Bishops departure. Brothers Roy Smith, Lawrence Skitzki, and Bruce Lescher, joined Jeffrey as our principal guests. Musical entertainment ranging from traditional carols through some popular Irish ditties to "when you were a tulip," was provided by our night nurse, Mr. Bob Browne, his two daughters and son-in-law. The Brothers got a large charge from the music. Our gratitude to all who helped make the party a success.

Brother Anselm Tatro joined our community on Sunday, December 20, and will remain at least until warm weather. Anselm is ninety years old, giving us three men in the post-ninety category.

We were happy to have Brother Robert Siegel join us for five days around the New Year's holiday. He practiced his culinary expertise, giving our kitchen staff a few days off. Thanks much, Robert.

One of our nurses, Mrs. Anne White, and her husband, Tom, entertained the staff with a party in their home on January 2. It was a grand affair and the only flaw of the evening was that the weather was the worst of the winter-for-driving-and several were unable to come.

Brother Florian provided us with an outdoor tree this season and its lights brightened the patio at night.

On Christmas day Brother Tom Shaughnessy organized six or seven of the Columba Brothers to join us for Mass and sing carols. We were glad to have them.

Hymns for Sunday Mass have been provided recently by Mr. Bob Browne, his voice, and his guitar.

FROM KING'S COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE

- Brother Just Paczesny was the main speaker for the Diamond Jubilee of the Alhama Caravan, International Order of the Alhambra (sometimes called the "Catholic Shriners.") Their principal charitable work is raising funds for teachers of the retarded.
- Brother Frederick Raehsler gave a talk to the Kiwanis on the Physician's Assistant program. (Fred is Assistant Director of the program.)
- The "latest" issue of the school paper listed eighteen "rules for a happy life." The author was not mentioned, but the last three rules were:
  - Don't tell Polish jokes in this area
  - If you must tell Polish jokes, don't tell them to the Dean of Students
  - If you do tell a Polish joke to the Dean of Students, be very, very good for the rest of your time as King's.

FROM HOLY CROSS, RIVER GROVE

- In a December news release titled "Associates and Friends Are Part of Life-blood of Holy Cross" Brother Thomas Corcoran expressed his gratitude to all who have made the 1982 "Giving Calendar" a most successful fund raising drive at the school.
- The Fathers' Club held its third annual New Year's Eve party at the school from 7 pm until 2 am - including dinner and dancing.
- In mid-December Robert Kolens, Athletic Director, announced that the school will field a full program in soccer beginning next school year. Soccer will be offered to interested students at all levels; freshman, sophomore, and varsity.

NEWPORT NEWS

A folder filled with reprints of paper articles, pictures, news reports, memos, etc. came to us from Brother Lambour in early January. Brother Lambour is Principal of Peninsula Catholic a small (270 boys and girls) high school with grades eight through twelve, located in a fifty-year old structure in downtown Newport News.

Early after 10 am on Monday, December 15, students in the school began suffering from nausea, headaches, dizziness, weakness, and fainting. By 1:15 about forty-five students (mostly girls) and one female faculty member had been taken to local hospitals and the rest of the student body evacuated to an Armory several blocks

away. Carbon monoxide poisoning was suspected, several weeks of testing and investigations have failed to give any evidence confirming carbon monoxide (or anything else) - except the symptoms fit. As a precautionary measure the school closed its Christmas holidays four days earlier than expected. No one's symptoms lasted beyond a day or so. The annual football tournament went on as scheduled December 28-30. School reopened on January 1 with no report of anything untoward other than much media exposure to see if "something happening" might re-occur.

Looking out, as I read through all the material, was the orderly nature and "calmness" that permeated the crisis, the evacuation, the entire situation. Parents, faculty, parents, hospital and ambulance personnel - all speak of a calm handling of a crisis. Brother Barry is to be highly commended for his leadership.

(Pedro Haering, CSC)

ST. PATRICK'S, MONROVIA

Following Murphy's Law, a letter came from Brother Thomas Dillman just two days after he went to press" in December. Presently

Tom is home in the States (from mid-December until the end of January.) Following are a few excerpts from his letter:

-Brother William Healy left after Thanksgiving for his vacation and a new assignment stateside, having completed twelve years in our Liberian mission. He will be missed not only for his contribution to our CSC community here, but by all of the different missionary communities for whom he did so many favors. Bill was especially known in the Monrovia area for his tireless efforts to upgrade the high school sports programs despite frequent frustrations. Perhaps the past year was the best organized and most successful. The Monrovia community is most appreciative of Brother Williams' contributions throughout these dozen years.

-The Monrovia Brothers will be teaching in two other high schools this year: Brother Donard Steffes will teach physics and chemistry and Brother Edward Foken will teach English literature at Cathedral, while Brother Thomas Dillman will teach senior math at St. Teresa. This will be our effort to help fill in subject areas where teacher availability leaves something to be desired. There are many Ghanaians now teaching here.

-Brothers Donard and David Naples are providing a great service to all the area religious with the ham radio. Hardly a week passes without someone's requesting a phone-radio contact to stateside relatives. Donard just finished teaching his first ham radio course. Several students qualified for novice or general operator's licenses.

The Interprovince Renewal Program will be held again this summer at the St. Joseph Spiritual Life Center in Valatie, New York. The program is scheduled to be four weeks, from July 14th until August 15th. The following areas will be addressed: 1) Holy Cross; foundation & charism, 2) Human Development, 3) Prayer & Leisure, 4) Personality Types & Prayer 5) Planning, 6) Spirituality; particular emphasis on Moreau's spirituality. The renewal experience will conclude with a week long directed retreat.

EDITOR'S PAGE

(Members of the Province are invited to send material for the NEWSNOTES to the Editor -- at Dujarie House -- by the fifth of the month. Material received after the fifth will be used, if not too dated, in the following month's issue. Thank you.)

In early December the head nurse at Dujarie House, Mrs. Shirley Rasmussen, asked me if she could write to Bishop McManus to invite him to stop in at our Christmas party and greet the Brothers who live here. (She had occasion to know he was going to be in South Bend that afternoon. As I mention elsewhere, he came and spent at least half an hour with us.) In the course of his visit here he mentioned that his secretary, in going through his mail, handed him a letter remarking, "Here is one you surely would want to respond to." It was Shirley's letter....On TV last Saturday I saw (heard) Digger Phelps remark to an interviewer that his secretary did an excellent job of shielding him from the mail which would "upset him or waste his time" (NOT his words but my interpretation of them)....I recall when Pope John Paul II visited this country I was struck by how the security successfully shielded him from any grass roots contact with the "common people." (I have no solution. The necessity of security is too blatantly apparent, even at the Vatican!)

Most of us are far removed (obviously) from bishops, coaches, and popes. No one screens our mail. It is easier for us to be aware. There are many areas of, and levels of, awareness. I am thinking primarily of the awareness that makes us know who is, and what is going on, around us -- in the same room, or building, or place. I think many of us who went through the "old style" novitates were somewhat brainwashed out of physical awareness by the importance placed upon recollection. If someone five feet away knocked over a ladder, spilling a bucket of water all over the place (and maybe on us), it was considered a virtue for us not even to notice it. For many years I feared for religious, steeped in recollection, who had to leave the cloister and drive an automobile.

Recently, in a most unexpected place, an essay on "A Spirituality of Death and Dying" by a Redemptorist priest, Denis McBride, I found a paragraph in praise of awareness (or in condemnation of non-awareness.) Father McBride says, "The Gospel is heavy with references to the virtue of awareness, just as it is clear about its condemnation of those who pay no attention to what is happening in their midst. In Matthew's scene of the last judgment (25:31-4) eternal happiness is given to those who 'see' the legion of the afflicted in their midst. Luke's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19-30) is one of the clearest indictments of those who pay no attention to what is happening on their doorstep: the rich man ignores the dying Lazarus at his gate, and he pays the price for his folly. In that parable, as in many of the stories of Jesus, charity for those in need depends first of all on being aware of the need. The rich man treated Lazarus as if he were already dead; he forgot about Lazarus, and Lazarus died of the rich man's forgetfulness. In Gospel terms, the rich man's insensitivity is ground enough for damnation; being otherwise engaged is not a justification when confronted with concrete human need. Thus, it was the rich man's distancing himself from the need of Lazarus which constituted his crime."

While it is surely not possible for every person to respond to every need of all the people with whom he comes into contact, that is not the problem. The problem, more often, is simply not learning to be aware of the things happening around us. Being unable to solve the "world's problems" may not be a very good argument to justify being unaware of the needs of those who live and work within arm's length.

(Pedro Haering, CSC)