



Word Winds

The Newsletter of the SVD Alumni Association

Volume 11, Issue 1

Summer 2009

In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through Him. What has come into being in Him was life, life that was the light of men; and light shines in darkness, and darkness could not overpower it.

Why I go to Jamaica

BY RICH SCHUMACHER
PERRYSBURG '66

“Soon come” is an oft-used, colorful Jamaican expression that in a general sense refers to time. It may mean minutes, hours or sometimes days.

In the case of this essay, “soon come” turned into 14 months, which is how long I have been promising Alumni Director Mike Cousins a story of the 2008 Mission Experience trip to Jamaica.

The 2008 experience was my third mission trip to Jamaica. Other writers’ articles about this volunteer opportunity have covered the physical aspects of building a house for a parishioner of one of the three churches that the Divine Word Missionaries staff: Our Lady of the Assumption in Morant Bay, St. Bartholomew’s in Yall’ahs, and St. Francis of Assisi in Port Morant.

Mission trippers also have built an outhouse with Buzz Heinzen’s signature half-moon cut-out; moved a house from the city to the country, carrying whole walls down and back up steep slopes; and installed a new roof on the food distribution center in Yall’ahs.

These examples illustrate the projects one might experience. The work can be physically demanding, but no particular building skills are required, just a willingness to extend a helping hand to someone in need and an open-mindedness about how things are done.

Brother Bernie Spitzley and Food for the Poor carefully screen the recipients—and the waiting list is long. Those who are chosen are expected to help, if physically able, and to pay for the house’s concrete and cinderblock base.

The day’s work is rewarding and after it is done, there is nothing better than Brother Bernie’s R&R (rehydration and reflection). Mission trippers also can participate in other ministries, such as visiting the sick and shut-ins, Bible study, helping with youth ministry programs, and more. Our physical presence shows that someone else cares. Our presence instills hope where it is easy to lose hope.

The most rewarding part for me is the interaction with the Jamaican people, the Divine Word Missionaries, other alumni and their spouses.

As other mission trippers have observed, the volunteer experience is an opportunity to give something back to Divine Word Missionaries for the education, training and spirituality that they



The Blue Hole lagoon near Port Charlotte is one of the island’s many natural beauties.

“We are able to do something for one week that—a long time ago—we thought we would be doing our whole lives.”

gave to us. We are able to do something for one week that—a long time ago—we thought we would be doing our whole lives.

As for the Divine Word Missionaries, seeing their dedication, different talents and willingness to share 10 to 16 hours a day makes me proud to claim a Society of the Divine Word connection.

I appreciated the way that Frs. Pierre Tevibenissan, Adam Oleszczuk, Joseph Galic, Walter Mendonca, and Manuel Antao, and, last but not least, Brother Bernie, share themselves with us. Where else can one experience the cultures and traditions of Togo, Poland, Croatia, India, and Michigan in one place?

Finally, the most interesting aspect to me is the Jamaican people themselves. Despite the lack of decent housing, electricity, running water and transportation, things that Americans take for granted, there is much evidence of joyfulness everywhere—from the bright colors of their clothing, their homes and the native plants to their colorful expressions. [See sidebar on page 14.]

Once while walking through Morant Bay, I heard someone yell, “Hey, white man.” I immediately could tell it was not spoken derogatorily. It was simply a way to get my attention since he

Continued on page 14

Inside this Issue

- 1 Jamaica
- 2 Director’s column
- 3 No bluffing: Epworth
- 4 Vows: Perrysburg
- 5 Back to business: Bay St. Louis
- 6 Alumni golf outing
- 7 East Troy picnic
- 8 A first in Frankenmuth
- 9 Miramar memories
- 10 Fall in Pittsburgh
- 11 Alumni tell all: Techny dinner
- 12 Second-generation reflection: East Troy retreat
- 13 West Virginia mission experience
- 14 Our baptismal call
- 15 SVD deaths
- 15 Upcoming events



CONTACT US

SVD Alumni
Association
svdalum@mwci.net
(888) 276-6536
www.svdalumni.org

For breaking news
about alumni,
events and volun-
teer opportunities,
go to the SVD
Alumni Association
website at www.svdalumni.org

From the director's desk

MIKE COUSINS

PERRYSBURG '65, EPWORTH '69

While pondering a topic for my column this issue, a number of thoughts remained jumbled inside my brain. The elections, the economy, war—all of these screamed for commentary. Then it hit me. Just look to our Society of the Divine Word formation process and find the good and lasting lessons that we learned and that have carried us through our lives.

The formation process, centered on becoming a missionary priest or brother, is about learning to be of service to others. When we were in the seminary, we had lofty aspirations. Over the years, many of us became absorbed in the day-to-day goals of living with all of its economic necessities, sometimes forgetting who we really were meant to become.

Now more than ever, when we look around at what has happened to our world—wealth based on greed, our home values dropping, jobs disappearing—we should be reminded that life is still about what the Divine Word Missionaries tried to instill in us during those years.

Service to others and using our talents for the greater good is more important now than ever. I thank the Lord for the many-faceted skills and adaptability that I have learned over the years. I imagine you do the same.

If you are interested in exercising those qualities, the SVD Alumni Association has opportunities in Jamaica and West Virginia for those who are willing to give of time and talent.

At our reunions, we take the time to honor some of those Divine Word Missionaries who have added meaning to our lives. Perhaps 2009 is the year for those who haven't been to a reunion or dinner to make plans and help us honor these important missionaries.

Many of us live elsewhere than where we attended school. If that's the case, plan on attending an event near your home. I have found that the family atmosphere of the Society of the Divine Word is the same wherever we travel, and I believe that if you attend the activity that is closest to where you live, you will find the welcoming family of the Divine Word Missionaries and have a great time.

Another advantage of attending alumni association functions is getting back in touch with friends from school. The years drop away and the person beneath the gray hair is still the one you remember.

The SVD Alumni Association has many email addresses on file, and if you drop me a line, perhaps I can help get you in touch with someone. Or better yet, if you are in touch with an old classmate and he hasn't heard of the Alumni Association, let us know about him.

Society of the Divine Word members have been supportive of the SVD Alumni Association. In return, our board of directors is looking at ways we might help them. We are still in discussion as to the best way to do this and are open to suggestions from you.



Mike Cousins
SVD Alumni Assn. Director

**“Service to others
and using our talents
for the greater good
is more important
now than ever.”**

Promote Vocations

- Pray daily for vocations.
- Ask someone if he or she has considered a religious vocation.
- Contact the Vocation Office if you know someone who might be interested. [See page 14.]



No bluffing: Epworth reunion offered river cruising and a peek in the kitchen

On Oct. 16, my wife Kathy and I found ourselves driving from Detroit, Mich., towards Dubuque, Iowa. Our eventual destination: Divine Word College in Epworth.

The purpose of this trip was to attend the Epworth reunion scheduled for Mission Sunday weekend and to honor Fr. Michael Hutchins, the longest-serving president of Divine Word College.

Friday evening was an informal gathering in the Pour House, the college student lounge where visitors and students mingled, shared refreshments and exchanged stories.

On Saturday, Phil Serafino and his wife, Fr. Hutchins and his brother Kevin, Jim Czarkowski, Ed and JoAnne Peterson, and Kathy and I enjoyed a two-hour lunch cruise on the Mississippi River. The trip took us downriver to the Julien Dubuque tomb and then back up the river, under the bridges up to the locks and dam, where Eagle Point Park overlooks the Mississippi.

It was a beautiful day. The evening began with a Mass celebrated by Fr. Hutchins for the alumni and students. After Mass, a social, then a catered dinner, followed by a program at which Art Roche delivered a tribute he composed for Fr. Hutchins, which was sung to the tune of "Davy Crockett," the theme song to the television program of the same name.

Ed Peterson also gave a brief tribute. Since Fr. Hutchins grew up in the eastern part of Iowa, it was a very special treat to be able to invite his family to attend, which they did enthusiastically.

His mom, dad, sister and brothers were very pleased to be included, and it was a wonderful experience to combine the Society of the Divine Word family with the Hutchins Family. It became a true family reunion.

After the tribute, we gathered once more in the Pour House so ably staffed by Fr. Ken Anich and the students. We enjoyed visiting and looking at old pictures.

We also received a unique, behind-the-scenes look at the kitchen on Saturday evening. We observed how much preparation goes into the making of the Mission Sunday celebration.



Many Divine Word Missionaries attended the Epworth reunion, Oct. 17-19. Standing in the back row from left to right: Fr. Khein Luu, Fr. Stan Uroda, Fr. Thu Pham, Fr. Tony Romo, Fr. Bill Shea, Fr. Gus Wall, Brother Mike Decker, Fr. Jim Bergin. Seated from left to right: Fr. Bob Mertes, Fr. Ken Anich, Fr. Mike Hutchins and Fr. Paul LaForge.

All of the food from different countries is prepared by the students. We witnessed one team preparing Chinese dumplings, and another team preparing Indonesian food. The smells of all the various foods, combined with the buzz in the air of students' enthusiasm, made us greatly anticipate Mission Sunday.

On Sunday, we attended Mass in the chapel, where the liturgy was celebrated in multicultural song with Chinese, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Spanish and Indonesian versions of different hymns being sung beautifully by the students. Fr. Gus Wall was the main celebrant with two rows of Divine Word Missionary priests concelebrating.

We concluded the weekend with Tastefest, where one could sample food from more than 20 countries. The delectable ranged from tapas to sticky rice to curry and more.

For those who live near Epworth, please make it a point to get in touch and attend one of the many cross-cultural events they sponsor through the year. Events on the school calendar include Mission Sunday liturgy and Tastefest, the Chinese New Year celebration, lectures and presentations by artists. For more information, check out the Divine Word College website at www.dwci.edu.

Oh yes, be sure to make arrangements to sit and visit with the students. Their stories are fascinating, and seeing America through their eyes is a wonderful experience.

Divine Word College graduated four students on May 16, 2009. In addition to seminary students, the College offers English-language programs for Divine Word Missionaries assigned to the United States and members of other religious communities.



My vows are your vows

BY WALT BRACKEN, SVD

The year 1968, what a year! Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy were assassinated that year. In many ways it was a year to forget.

And still, for those of us who took first vows on Sept. 8, 1968, in Bay St. Louis, Miss., this was a year to remember. We were now Divine Word Missionaries. Granted, we were in temporary vows, but we had SVD behind our names, an honor we had anticipated for many years.

The fact that both Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy worked for civil rights was significant. The fact that we took vows in the State of Mississippi, long known for racial intolerance and violence, was significant. And also significant for us was the fact we were now members of an international, interracial group of men who represented something different than the prejudice and hatred that too often was part of our nightly news.

And last year, in commemoration of 40 years of vows, Mike Cousins and the Alumni Committee honored me at the Perrysburg Reunion in June. I now share a few reflections on that day.

Being honored was certainly a joy for me. I also was joyful because many relatives surprised me with their presence at the reunion. My niece, Cathy, coordinated the effort and managed to keep the secret from me. What surprises me most is how my relatives kept a lid on this surprise. No one blew the secret.

I also feel gratitude. I am grateful to Mike and his committee. I am grateful to my niece and all the relatives. And, not least of all, I am grateful for the Perrysburg faculty, my classmates and other P-Burgers I have been blessed to know over the years.

Yes, I am the only member of my freshman Perrysburg class of 27 to take vows as a Divine Word Missionary. But my vows are the same as what my classmates and many others have pledged in their lives.

Most of you have taken marriage vows and have committed yourselves to loving your spouse in a very special way. True, some have been divorced, and you are no less loving than others who have managed to stay together. Likewise, some who have taken religious vows have gone other ways in their lives. And they, too, are no less loving than those who are still in vows.

All of us, by virtue of our baptism, have the same call in life. We are all called to show the love of God to others. That love is expressed in differ-



Fr. Walt Bracken (left) poses with his cousin Francis at the 2008 Perrysburg reunion. The SVD Alumni Association honored Fr. Bracken for his 40 years of service as a Divine Word Missionary.

“We are to demonstrate God’s compassion, not to be cold and indifferent. We are not meant to be consecrated refrigerators.”

ent ways. We who take religious vows do not have the call to love one particular person, but we are definitely called to love. We are to demonstrate God’s compassion, not to be cold and indifferent. We are not meant to be consecrated refrigerators.

My vows in the Society of the Divine Word are not special or on a higher plain compared to marriage vows. But my vows are unique. My vows ask me to live a life of committed love differently than couples live out their married love. We have, in the past, mistakenly thought of marriage vows to be less of a spiritual commitment. I have met many laity who put my spirituality to shame.

For 21 years, I have worked with *Retrouvaille*, a peer ministry for hurting couples. I am continually humbled by couples who share their own past hurts and struggles to assist other couples who are in the midst of misery. My appreciation for the vows of married couples has assisted me in my appreciation and understanding of my own vows.

I thank all of you who have been a part of my life. My Perrysburg confreres, faculty and students have been and continue to be a blessing for me.

The following letter was written by Cathy St. Louis, Fr. Walt Bracken’s niece who helped arrange the surprise visit from his brother and other relatives at the reunion.

Continued on next page



Back to business after Katrina

BAY ST. LOUIS HOSTS THE ST. AUGUSTINE ALUMNI

For the first time since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the St. Augustine branch of the SVD Alumni Association was able to get together at Bay St. Louis.

During the weekend of Oct. 17-19, 2008, early arrivals spent Friday evening visiting and catching up on events that happened since the last reunion. One of the unique things about the St. Augustine alumni is that they have maintained their organization over the years and have a formal organization with a business meeting during their reunion.

Attendees at this year's meeting were: Bishop Leonard Olivier, Fr. Thomas Potts, Robert Antwine, Robert Bohnes, Earl Boyd, Joseph Chevalier, William Dauphin, Aaron Fleageance, James LaChapelle, Eugene LeBoeuf, Winfield Ledet, John Moore, Greg Pappion, Pat Pichon, Charles O. Prejean Sr. and Steve Terrebonne.

The Association has raised money to help with the restoration of the retreat center and the chapel windows. To date they have donated \$3,300 to the Southern Province for these projects.

Another project they are undertaking in the coming year is restoring the graveyard crucifix. Many of the men are still actively involved with the Society of the Divine Word and one of the topics of discussion was the establishment of a lay apostolate to work as partners of the Divine Word Missionaries and to assist in parishes and fundraising, as well as using daily prayer to support the missionaries.

After further discussion of other projects, such as a group to help clean up the grounds, the



Kneeling (left to right): Patrick Pichon, Deacon Eugene LeBoeuf, Earl A. Boyd, Joseph Chevalier, Aaron Fleageance and James LaChapelle. Those standing include Fr. Tom Potts, Robert Antwine, John Moore, Fr. George Gormley, Winfield Ledet, Fr. George Heffner, Fr. Stan Plutz, Bishop Leonard Olivier, Robert Bohnes, Brother James Heeb, Brother Richard Chambers and Charles O. Prejean Sr.

meeting was adjourned. They spent the rest of the day and evening in the familiar Society of the Divine Word camaraderie.

On Sunday morning, they gathered for Mass, celebrated by Bishop Olivier and followed by brunch. Special mention was made of the alumni who have died recently, including Fr. Philip Allen, Fr. John LaBauve, Fr. Robert Pung, Fr. Fisher Robinson, Fr. Joseph Simon, Wilbur LeMelle, Ennis Malveaux and Morris Prescott.

This year's Bay St. Louis reunion will be Oct. 16-18, 2009. For more information go to www.svdalumni.org.

FATHER BRACKEN continued from previous page

On behalf of the Bracken and Derdaele families, thank you to Mike Cousins and all those of the Society of the Divine Word for inviting us to celebrate Uncle Walt's 40th anniversary! We had a blast!

To be able to honor Uncle Walt with his Divine Word family was very special.

When first spreading the word to our Canadian, Illinois, Michigan and North Carolina relatives, no one hesitated when they found out it was for Uncle Walt.

The anticipation of surprising him at the event was very exciting, especially for those of us who visited with him just one week prior. Thankfully, he didn't catch on!

It was thrilling to watch Uncle Walt be greeted over and over by those he was so surprised to see at his reunion. Everyone had a fantastic time and still ask when the next party will occur.

Growing up I remember having large gatherings with both sides of our family together. The reunion celebration was reminiscent of those times. To be able to share our memories and thoughts about Uncle Walt was a special privilege for all who attended.

"Three Cheers for Walter our Priest!" This tune will live on for many years to come. Thanks again to those who organized and gave us a wonderful photo to commemorate.

LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MEN

Is a muse speaking to you? The SVD Alumni Association office is searching for *Word Winds* contributors. If you're interested in flexing your writing muscles, give us a call or write to: svdalum@mwci.net

In addition to stories about events, we welcome your reflections, observations and insights into life, spirituality, ministry and faith as stated in our mission statement on the back cover of the newsletter.



Sunshine and fellowship made for a successful 2008 golf outing

What a difference a year makes! In 2008, the weather cooperated, and we didn't have to track the Weather Channel all morning before our tee times.

On June 2, 2008, Vocations Director Len Uhal and Development Director Mark Singsank drove in from Epworth and went directly to the Willowhill Golf Course, where they met Nick Schroeder and Jim Grilliot to get nine holes in before the rest of the alumni arrived at 1:30 p.m.

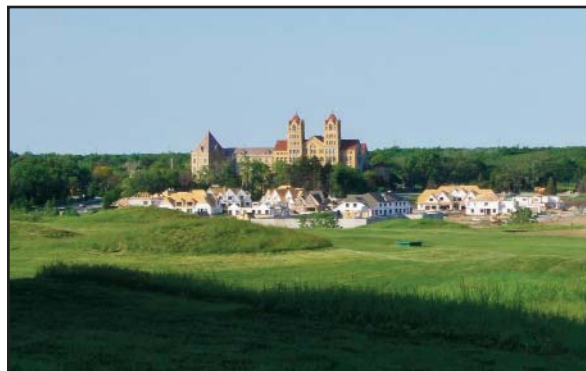
Several Divine Word Missionaries joined us, including Frs. John Swift, Fred Rudolph and Ray Quetchenbach, who played admirably. At 92 years young, Fr. Swift kept his swing going for the entire nine holes and shot a very respectable 54.

Fr. Quetchenbach surprised us all with a 44, chipping one in on the ninth hole from 100 yards out. We think he had some extra help from somewhere or perhaps it was Divine Providence.

Fr. Rudolph enjoyed himself while winning the prize for the hardest worker. Other attendees included Pete Amelse, Lou Bolchiazzy, Rick Copalello, Dan Hourihane, Jim Palm, Ed Peterson, Mike Witte, and Chicago Province Human Resources and Administration Director Tom Artz.

After putting the greens, we retired to the steak cookout, where we were joined by other alumni, including Mike Gaughan, Dan Kadolph, Emmerich Koller, M. Kreinus, Andy Lowen, Paul Lowen, Henry Perez, Mike Perez, Rich Vadnal, Fr. Walt Bracken, Fr. Jim Bergin, Fr. Mark Weber and Fr. Raul Caga. Fr. Caga is based in the Philippines and was traveling the United States on a concert tour.

Special thanks to Chef Marnie Preciado of the Techny Residence and to Conference Marketing



Society of the Divine Word alumni enjoy steak, baked potatoes and corn on the cob at the 2008 Techny Golf Outing. Some of the men around the table include Fr. Fred Rudolph, Fr. Mark Weber, Len Uhal (partially hidden), Mike Perez, Mike Witte, Mike Gaughan, Fr. Jim Bergin, Emmerich Kohler, Fr. Walt Bracken and Mark Singsank.

Manager Erin Brown and the maintenance crew for doing a fine job of cleaning the shelter, mowing the grass, and getting the site ready for us.

And the winner is...

Congratulations to the prize winners of the 2008 Techny Golf Outing. The winners were:

Best score flight A: Tom Artz and Dan Hourihane

Best score flight B: Pete Amelse and Rick Copalello

Hole 1 longest putt: Ed Peterson

Hole 3 closest to pin on the drive: Mike Witte

Hole 5 closest to the pin on the drive: Lou Bolchiazzy

Hole 7: closest to pin from off the green: Tom Artz

Hole 9 longest drive: Jim Grilliot

Fewest Putts: Jim Palm





Food, fun and guests from abroad abound at annual East Troy picnic

The last Saturday in June has become a must-do event on a number of East Troy alumni calendars.

That's the weekend of the annual East Troy picnic. The event always promises fun, food and friendship. The uniqueness of East Troy is its location: a beautiful lake, comfortable boat-house, well-kept grounds, and of course, friendly alumni and their families. All of these combine to make it one of the best attended events on the alumni calendar year after year.

And 2008 was definitely not an exception. Guests who camped out began arriving on Friday and spent the night around a campfire on the shore. On Saturday morning, Brother Bernie Spitzley called on Vocation Director Len Uhal and his work crew to help shovel lots of gravel onto the lakeside roadway due to the massive rainstorms during the few days prior.

After shoveling a few trailer loads of gravel and digging a few trenches for drainage down to the lake, Len and company had the site passable for the rest of the visitors.

As the various guests and their families began arriving, we lit the grills and iced down the refreshments, as the sharing of food for one and all began. Tacos, brats, steaks, chicken, hotdogs, and a potpourri of side dishes filled the menu. Like the feeding of thousands on the shores of Galilee, food was plentiful and no one went away hungry.

Colin Lamb brought his catamaran and his dog. The pontoon boat took a few trips around the lake for interested visitors while the attendees' dogs gladly jumped into the water to show off their skills.

One unique difference this year was the presence of members of the Philippine alumni group, PAXSVD, who came from Chicago with their tents and joined in the friendship, food and fun. The Society of the Divine Word family includes not only alumni from each North American locale but from around the world.

Mass was celebrated by Fr. Ed Peklo. Fr. David Mayer, who was at Techny for the summer, on home leave from his station in Nagoya, Japan, joined him on the altar.



Society of the Divine Word alumni gather for their annual photo on the pier while the next generation gets ready for the big catch at the East Troy reunion, June 28, 2008.



Alumnus Mike Witte dishes up brats and hotdogs while his son patiently waits at the East Troy reunion, June 28, 2008. The John Schmidt Family looks on as they return from a boat trip on Lake Beulah.

Of course, the traditional trip to Lauber's Ice Cream followed, where many friends said goodbye until summer 2009.

If you live in the Midwest, mark your calendars for the next East Troy picnic. The event is tentatively scheduled for Sat., June 26, 2010.

Fr. Ed Peklo is the rector of the East Troy community. Currently, nine brothers and priests live there, maintaining the facility; assisting parishes, hospitals and prisons; and enjoying semi-retirement.



If you would like to organize or host an alumni get-together near your hometown, please contact the SVD Alumni Association at (888) 276-6536 or write to svdalum@mwci.net.

The alumni association can supply a list of Society of the Divine Word alumni in your area. To date, alumni have planned local gatherings in California, Illinois and Michigan.

If you're planning to travel and want to reconnect with old classmates along the way, we can help. Again, call or write to the SVD Alumni Association at (888) 276-6536 or svdalum@mwci.net.

A first in Frankenmuth

BY MIKE COUSINS

What began as a promise to buy Bernie Spitzley a chicken dinner became the first annual Frankenmuth reunion. Brother Bernie, who is working in Jamaica, returned to the Midwest for home leave last August.

My home is only about two hours away from Brother Bernie's hometown in Michigan. Being a neighborly guy—and having had a whole week of Jamaican chicken in its various forms along with Red Stripe beer during a mission trip in Jamaica—I made the offer. He accepted.

We decided to meet in nearby Frankenmuth, Mich. Frankenmuth is a unique, small town with a Bavarian flavor. It is famous for its chicken dinners and cold beer. After we settled on the place and time, we extended the offer to all Michigan alumni, regardless of school.

We ended up with a group of 14 at the Bavarian Inn Restaurant in Frankenmuth. In addition to Brother Bernie Spitzley, Archbishop Michael Blume surprised us by driving up from South Bend, Ind., to join us. Rounding out the group were Brother Bernie's brother Marvin, Marvin's wife Jeannette, Kim Middleton, Jack and Barb Schwab, Nick Schroeder, Jim Bartkowiak and his wife Barb, Ken David and his wife, and my wife Kathy.

Bernie and his brother arrived early. We found them at the bar, making sure they didn't let their German heritage down. Another facet that made the Bavarian Inn a good choice is the restaurant's live music from Linda Lee and the Bavarian Inn Band.

Linda is an accordion player. While she was in our private dining room, she recognized Jim Bartkowiak as someone with whom she had gone to grade school. We made Linda and the Bavarian Inn Band honorary alumni. In return, they treated us to 20 minutes of polka music.

"It was a refreshing day to connect with alumni and Barb Schwab, who did the Jamaican Mission Experience," exclaimed Brother Bernie. "Besides a delicious meal, there was stimulating conversation."

If you missed the fun in 2008, we are going to do it again on Aug. 1, 2009, at the Bavarian Inn Restaurant in Frankenmuth. No reservations needed, just show up at the door around noon, ask for the SVD Alumni and order off the menu. *Please call Mike Cousins or send an email so he can reserve a room that is large enough. Everyone will pay his or her own tab.*



Brother Bernie Spitzley, his brother Marvin and Marvin's wife Jeannette keep barstools warm at the Bavarian Inn, the location of the first annual Society of the Divine Word Frankenmuth reunion.



Front row from left to right: Jeannette Spitzley, Barb Schwab, Kathleen Cousins, and Barb Bartkowiak. Back row: Marvin Spitzley, Kim Middleton, Jack Schwab, Mike Cousins, Archbishop Michael Blume, Nick Schroeder, Jim Bartkowiak, Brother Bernie Spitzley.



Accordion-player Linda Lee and her strolling minstrels of the Bavarian Inn Band entertain the crowd with rousing polka music at the Bavarian Inn in Frankenmuth, Mich.



Miramar memories

For the group of men gathered together at Miramar for last fall's alumni meeting, it was a time for wonderful memories and realizing our frailty.

Jim McDermott, a staunch and supportive member of the Miramar alumni was not with us. He had been having some major health issues.

As an unofficial poet for our group, he had cheered us up with his whimsical poems and take-no-prisoners attitude. Shortly after our gathering, Jim passed away. He is sorely missed.

The group of men who did attend the Miramar meeting began with coffee in the morning followed with the start of the meeting in the afternoon and a shared lunch.

Fr. Fred Timp, who was on home leave from Africa, was welcomed and gave an insightful lecture. He showed slides of some of the work still being done and some of the needs in the African continent.

Among his slides were pictures of the chapel built with the Miramar funds and of the first wedding held there. Fr. Joseph Connolly also brought some pictures of the work being done to prevent the Burundi Ulcer from spreading. This terrible disease is being thwarted thanks in part to the generous donation of the Miramar alumni.

Dave Theis from California showed up unexpectedly along with Fr. Charles Heskamp who had never been to Miramar until now and was suitably impressed.

However, it wasn't all serious missionary talks. Jim Harvey's daughter, Nutritionist Catherine Silva, came and gave an overview on selecting healthier foods.

She gave a demonstration on determining healthy versus unhealthy foods by using a method called contact reflex analysis. Just like the Apostle Thomas after Christ's Resurrection, many alumni were skeptical until the non-believers stepped up to the podium and saw the reality for themselves.

Catherine asked the volunteer to hold his arm in front of him at a 90-degree angle from the floor. She then held food (such as refined sugar, an apple, oatmeal and a granola bar) near his chest. Simultaneously, she applied pressure on the top of his outstretched arm. If the food appeared unhealthy for him, then his arm would give. How-



Fr. Ed Dudink, a master gardener, designed this beautiful Japanese Garden spot outside the retreat center.



The smiling faces of the attendees as they gather in the conference room at the Retreat Center.

ever, the healthy food did not seem to trigger the same response, and the volunteer's arm resisted the pressure.

The following day, the Doubting Thomases went to Mass. Fr. Jack Farley, recently reassigned to Miramar, said Mass in the chapel with Brother Don Champagne supplying the music.

"Our group at Miramar is a warm outgoing association who are proud of our SVD heritage," Fr. Connolly said. "We want to welcome any alumni, regardless of the school he attended. We hope that alumni who live on the East Coast will join us for our fall meeting at the Miramar Retreat Center."

The next Miramar meeting will be Sept. 28-29, 2009. For more information, see the SVD Alumni website at www.svdalumni.org or contact Jim Callanan at jimmariecal@msn.com to reserve your spot.



Four Divine Word Missionaries live at our residence in Pittsburgh. They take part in mission advancement, assist local parishes and provide community service.

Fall is fine in Pittsburgh

The 2008 reunion in Pittsburgh resumed its normally scheduled time this year as members gathered Oct. 3-5.

In 2007, we moved the date to summertime so that Fr. Tim Lenchak, who now works at the Generalate in Rome, could join us. This year, we were blessed with the presence of Fr. Ray Hober and Brother John Debold, who are based in Pittsburgh.

On the Friday evening of the reunion, we gathered at the Georgetowne Inn restaurant at the top of Mt. Washington for dinner and the beautiful view of the city as the sun set.

One of the things our group is known for enjoying is taking advantage of the different sights and sounds in and around Pittsburgh. This year was no different as Mike Cousins had arranged a couple of interesting side trips.

On Saturday morning, we found ourselves on the south side of Pittsburgh where we split up into two small groups and went on a guided walking tour of this historic neighborhood.

Our tour covered everything from old historical district buildings to modern updates and some of the side streets where people had converted many buildings to condos and lofts. We recognized the multi-ethnic make-up of the South Side when it came to lunchtime. The choices were wonderful.

At mealtime, we split up. One group went to a local Orthodox church for a pierogi dinner. Another enjoyed good old American pizza and a beer, yet a third bunch ate lunch at a wonderful Lebanese restaurant with Middle Eastern cuisine and a menu that offered stuffed grape leaves, hummus and lamb.

After lunch, we reconvened and crossed town to go through the National Aviary. A wonderful gem of a place where they have a free flying area where visitors can sit and watch the birds put on a show at feeding time.

We saw feathered fauna from various climates. There was the penguin show, and many exhibits, including a tropical area, where many-colored plumed birds flew freely as we walked amongst them. There was even a desert room, featuring birds found in the arid areas of the United States.

On Saturday evening, our group walked two blocks up the hill from the Holiday Inn to the Society of the Divine Word house on Lytton Street. Fr. Hober celebrated the Mass, and Brother John made all of us feel welcome in their home.

After Mass, we took the easier part of the walk,



A view of the Cathedral of Learning as seen from the SVD house.



The Girard alumni prepare to tackle the walking tour of Southside Pittsburgh.

downhill back to the hotel and our social hour and dinner. Fr. Hober, who spent most of his years in the Philippines, was our honoree this year.

During his speech, he talked about his years at Girard and his years as a missionary. One unique gift Fr. Hober has, and used quite readily in the Philippines, was the ability to use a divining rod to help find water.

After a little prompting, he gave a demonstration and told us of his success rate in the Philippines, helping small villages. Fr. Hober now spends his time giving mission talks throughout the Diocese of Pittsburgh and filling in for local priests when they go on vacation.

On Sunday morning, the traditional gathering for breakfast took place; final goodbyes were said; and we parted ways until next year.

Mark your calendars! The next Pittsburgh reunion will be Oct. 2-4, 2009. The headquarters once again will be the Holiday Inn in Oakland, Penn. If you live within driving distance of Pittsburgh, we hope you'll make the trip. You won't be disappointed.



Fr. Ray Hober delights alumni with tales of his life as a missionary.



Alumni tell all

AN EVENING WITH FR. JOHN DONAGHEY

Alumni and guests honored a longtime member of the Society of the Divine Word at the annual Techny dinner on Nov. 22, 2008. Fr. John Donaghey, originally from Massachusetts, was the honoree.

During the program, several speakers told humorous and enlightening stories, including Fr. Larry Finnegan, an Irishman who spent many years as a missionary in the Caribbean.

In addition, Fr. Ken Anich said he appreciated the encouragement Fr. Donaghey gave to him as a young priest when he faced an assignment with which he felt uncomfortable. Fr. Stan Uroda praised Fr. Donaghey for his constant support of the sick priests and brothers, never missing a chance to visit them when they were hospitalized.

Other alumni remembered stories of Fr. Donaghey's never-ending vigilance at Epworth, where those who violated curfew would be summoned bright and early at 6 a.m. to Father's office. In one such incident, a group of students stayed up late in the Pour House at Epworth, enjoying their beer.

When they heard Fr. Donaghey coming, they hid behind the sofas and chairs hoping to not be discovered. Without saying a word, Fr. Donaghey sat on the sofa and proceeded to read the newspaper. Two hours later, he got up to leave. As he turned off the lights, he said to the room, "Good-night, boys. I'll see you in the morning."

"As alumni director, I have heard this story repeated from at least three different sources over the years so it is not an urban legend," Mike Cousins said. "However, my sources shall remain anonymous to protect the guilty."

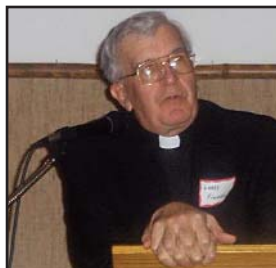
Many alumni compared Father's *look* to that practiced by their mothers and the nuns who taught grade school during their earlier years. With "The Look," no sermons needed to be preached. We immediately became penitent and resolved to improve our lives, said one alumnus.

Along with the direct impact that Fr. Donaghey had on alumni, he also contributed to establishing policies on the international level. He worked with the Catholic Church in Russia to establish protocol and policy books that are still followed today.

Fr. Donaghey formulated the *Handbook for*



Fr. John Donaghey delivers a sermon at a Mass celebrated before the annual Techny dinner.



Fr. Larry Finnegan shares stories about Fr. John Donaghey during a program that honored the latter at Techny last November.



From left to right: Fr. Stan Uroda, Tom Tebbe, Fr. Roger Schroeder and Fr. Lukas Batmomolin at the Techny dinner, Nov. 22.

Superiors SVD, a 434-page procedure manual and also was active at several General Chapters and held many positions during his many years of service including Provincial from 1973-79. He has taken on many special projects during the years.



Reflecting on an alumni retreat from a second-generation perspective



Kneeling from left to right: Peter Amelse, Paul Brouillette, Larry Lulay, Jerome Kowalski. Standing from left to right: Jeff Amelse, Pat Leddy, Jim Wiedner, Jim Prombo, Derek Kowalski, Jim Palm, Tom Prombo, Greg Laka Jr., Gene Ohearn, Tom Pajak, Greg Laka, Jerry Stermer, Dave Gorecki, an unknown participant, Mark Koleno, Emmerich Kohler. The priest in the middle is Fr. Andy Biller.

A number of Divine Word Missionary alumni have been going to East Troy for retreat weekends for the past few years. The following is a letter written by one of their sons. It illuminates the hidden results of the Society of the Divine Word formation process that many of us experienced. – Mike Cousins

Hello,

My name is Tom Prombo, and I am a 24-year-old male who still feels and acts like a teenager a lot of the time. I attend college, ride mountain bikes and love to have fun with just about any activity.

During my high school and college years, my father asked me to attend retreats with him and oftentimes with my brother and brothers-in-law. Until two years ago, I was reluctant to accompany my father to anything that even resembled a retreat.

The reason you might wonder. Well, it's the same reason most of us probably do not want to attend retreats—because we feel that retreats are a little different than whom we are. We feel we are good Christians and that retreats just are not our forté.

I use to think that those retreats were gatherings of religious “freaks” who wanted to change who I am. I cannot speak for all retreats, but what I did realize is that at the Society of the Divine Word retreat, the majority of participants are people just like you and me. It is definitely a retreat with everyday ordinary men.

What happened to me and how did I come to attending retreats? I really do not know. Maybe, it was my brother-in-law asking me for four years in a row to go to Promise Keepers with him, my father, and my brother, or maybe it was just my time to take a leap and try something new.

When I accepted an invitation to attend the Society of the Divine Word retreat with my father, I really didn't know what to expect, but I guess it really did not matter. I was not going to the retreat to find myself, to look for answers or for any specific reason that would benefit me in any way.

But I came out of that retreat with more than I could have imagined. It was like a movie you know nothing about and since you know nothing about that movie, you have no expectations. After the movie ends, you realize that the movie was possibly one of the best movies you have seen in a long time.

Is it because you had no expectations and no one told you it was awesome? For me, that is the exact reason. I encourage other sons of the Society of the Divine Word alumni to join their fathers at next year's retreat.

I promise that all of these gentlemen are just like you and me. They are average Joes. No religious freaks that want to change who you are. These men are all different in their unique ways like you and I are unique.

Every one of the men gave me something to walk away with from the retreat: encouragement to do better and push myself to achieve, pride, friendship, a new family to belong to, words of wisdom, and more confidence. All of them gave me more than words can describe.

But forget what I have said about the retreat. If you want to know what the Society of the Divine Word retreat is, then join your father and us next year. You know, some of the best things that happen in our lives come from occurrences we didn't plan. Take a chance!



Make the most of your association



These guys came to work! During the summer of 2008, five Society of the Divine Word alumni worked on several projects. The participants included (from left to right) John Myslak, Richard Matthews, Nick Schroeder, Ron Magin and Greg Hannahs.

One of the benefits of being a Society of the Divine Word alumnus is the opportunity to take part in true mission experiences. Along with the mission trip offered to Jamaica in February, you also can help the Divine Word Missionaries in West Virginia.

The men who go to Appalachia are men of action. Just read the comments from Greg Hannahs, one of the attendees. The SVD Alumni Association has planned another trip for June 21-27, 2009,

and we have a full crew of six volunteers giving of their time and talent this summer in the last week of June.* I would like to thank Fr. Elmer Nadicksbernd, recently retired, for his support of the Alumni Association over the years and to welcome Fr. Mattheus Ro as pastor of St. Thomas Parish in Gassaway. Other alumni and I look forward to working with him this summer.

Mike Cousins

We were busy

THE WEST VIRGINIA MISSION EXPERIENCE

The Society of the Divine Word alumni got the job done. Our project for the week was to work on repairs needed to a local family's house trailer. We did a lot in a short time: foundation repair, one new outside wall, replaced the floor in the kitchen and bathroom, new kitchen sink, replaced a cast iron tub with a shower, replaced windows, painted, and on the last day, we installed new doors at Risen Lord Catholic Church in Maysel, a mission parish of Gassaway.

Five of us worked on these projects along with students from Charleston Catholic High School. We ended with Mass and supper at Risen Lord on Wednesday where Fr. Elmer Nadicksbernd served the community.

Greg Hannahs

**Word Winds* went to press as the volunteers headed to Appalachia for the 2009 West Virginia Mission Experience. For more information about the 2010 trip, go to www.svdalumni.org.



During the 2008 alumni mission trip to Appalachia, volunteers installed new windows in the trailer of a local family. The entire trailer needed repair, and the volunteers will continue their work this year on the same trailer.*



The last project of the week was to install new doors at Risen Lord parish.



Check out the Vocation website. It contains video clips of brothers, priests, alumni, seminarians and others talking about their life, work in formation and faith. Go to www.svdvocations.org.

Our baptismal call

A LIFELONG VOCATION

BY LEN UHAL

From time to time, I am invited to speak to students in schools or parish religious education classes. In fact, I spoke with juniors at two different Catholic high schools in Iowa in the last couple of months.

At the first school, I spoke specifically about vocations. At the second school, I spoke about the missionary work of the Church and the Society of the Divine Word. Whatever the topic, I start each presentation the same way—reminding the students about our common vocation, our baptismal call.

At the time of our baptism, God calls us to live a life of holiness and a life of service. I always ask the students to help define what “holiness” and “service” mean.

Surprisingly, they usually do a pretty good job! I hear such answers as, “live a good life, help other people, be filled with faith, follow the Ten Commandments, love God and love your neighbor, be nice to people, show respect, think of others first, show care and concern for other people, and be the best you can be.”

After receiving answers like that, it is easy to focus my comments in one of two directions—

talk about how they will live out their baptismal call later in their lives or share with them how vowed religious live out their vocation. I then challenge the students to figure out how they “are sent” as missionaries locally and globally.

As Society of the Divine Word alumni, we continue to fulfill our baptismal call. Whether we entered vowed religious life, were ordained to the priesthood or diaconate, remained single or exchanged vows in marriage, we are still invited and challenged to live lives of holiness and service.

How are we doing? No matter our age, we can continue to assess our response to God’s call in our lives. As the tenth step of Alcoholics Anonymous encourages us to do, we can take a “personal inventory” regularly to reflect on our response.

I pray that the Holy Spirit continues to fill us with the necessary gifts to respond in unique and creative ways to be the face of Jesus to those God has put in our lives.

For more information about SVD vocations, contact Len Uhal at Divine Word College, Vocation Office, P.O. Box 380, Epworth, IA 52045. Call 800-553-3321 or write to svdvocations@dwci.net.

WHY I GO TO JAMAICA continued from page 1

didn’t know my name. Similarly, one of the Divine Word Missionary priests from India, Fr. Mendonca, tells of being addressed as “Hey, Indian.”

Other examples of their joyfulness are ready smiles and laughter and, of course, their music. Jamaicans display powerful examples of the resilience of the human spirit in the face of a seemingly hopeless environment, abject poverty, high unemployment, teen pregnancy, AIDS, violence and substandard housing.

As I said before, I believe our presence shows them that someone else cares about them. I believe this act is the essence of our Catholic faith and tradition. And yet lessons that I have learned from the Jamaican people of the St. Thomas Civil Parish easily dwarf my contributions to them.

Please consider going in February 2010. It’s a powerful experience. Not to mention that those of us who have gone multiple times would love to see new faces.

Editor’s note: Rich has recently retired and has already committed to next year’s Jamaica Mission Experience. Won’t you consider joining him? For more information, go to www.svdalumni.org.

Turn of a phrase

In Jamaica, the people employ phrases and expressions that are as colorful as the landscape. Alumnus Rich Schumacher returned to the States with a few:

What they say...	What it means...
Soon come	All in good time
No naked fire	No smoking
Sleeping policeman	Speed bump
Head no good	He’s crazy



**STAY
CONNECTED**

Do we have your current email address? Take a moment to send your email address so that we can keep you posted on upcoming activities and Society of the Divine Word news.

Please mail it to:
svdalum@mwci.net

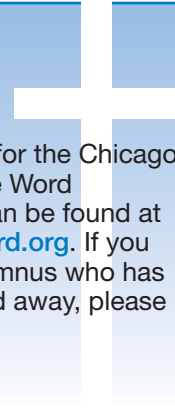
or

SVD Alumni Association
P.O. Box 6038
Techy, IL 60082-6038

If you keep in touch with a fellow alumnus, please pass along this information or call 888-276-6536.

Requiescat in Pacem

Remembering our Deceased Alumni



5/22/08	Fr. John Wald	1/18/09	Fr. Leo Hotze
7/4/08	Fr. John Swift	2/4/09	Fr. Thomas Cassidy
7/13/08	Fr. John LeBauve	5/10/09	Fr. Norman St. John
8/12/08	Fr. Roger Arnold		
8/17/08	Brother Joseph Urban	Dates unknown:	
9/3/08	Fr. Lawrence Wagner	Jim McDermott (Miramar)	
12/9/08	Fr. Ed Wald	Bob Neis (East Troy '64)	
		Rick Badowski (East Troy '64)	
		Joe Mikovits (Girard '49)	

The obituaries for the Chicago Province Divine Word Missionaries can be found at www.divineword.org. If you know of an alumnus who has recently passed away, please let us know.

Upcoming events

The following dates refer to the 2009 calendar year with the exception of the Jamaican Mission Experience.

DATE/TIME	EVENT	OTHER INFORMATION
Saturday, Aug. 1	Frankenmuth Michigan Alumni Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join fellow alumni from all Divine Word Missionary seminaries for lunch at the Bavarian Inn Order off the menu and pay at the table Take advantage of all that Frankenmuth has to offer: Bronner's Christmas Wonderland, Bavarian Belle Riverboat, Fortress Golf Course and more
Monday-Tuesday, Sept. 28-29	Annual Miramar Alumni Reunion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost: \$40 per person for day-trippers; \$75 for overnights To reserve your spot, contact Jim Callanan at jimmariecal@msn.com
Friday-Sunday, Oct. 2-4	Pittsburgh Area Alumni Reunion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friday evening dinner at Mt. Washington Saturday activities Saturday Mass at SVD house followed by dinner For room reservations, call Holiday Inn University Center at 412-682-6200
Friday-Sunday, Oct. 16-18	Bay St. Louis Reunion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information to come. Watch the SVD Alumni website!
Saturday, Nov. 14 <i>Please note the date has been changed to accommodate more alumni and avoid conflict with the Thanksgiving holiday.</i>	Annual Alumni Dinner at Techy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mass in the African Chapel in Techy Towers at 5 p.m. Social hour at 6 p.m.; dinner and program at 7 p.m. Honorees will be Frs. George and Jim Bergin
<i>Dates to be announced</i>	Bordentown Reunion	
Feb. 5-13, 2010	Jamaican Mission Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More information to come. Watch the SVD Alumni website!

Questions? News to Share? Please contact Alumni Director Mike Cousins at (888) 276-6536 or svdalum@mwci.net. Continue to check our website: www.svdalumni.org for updates and video postings throughout the year.



SVD Alumni Association
Society of the Divine Word
P.O. Box 6038
Techny, IL 60082-6038

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Northbrook, IL
PERMIT NO. 251



Mission Statement

The primary goal of the SVD Alumni Association is to keep our spirit of community and fellowship alive. As extended family of St. Arnold Janssen, we:

Participate in the SVD Mission

- By promoting vocations
- By sponsoring mission experiences
- By praying for missionaries around the world

Promote Togetherness

- By sponsoring regional gatherings
- By publishing newsletters
- By hosting a website

Offer Opportunities for Spiritual Renewal

- By conducting recollections and retreats
- By encouraging prayer for one another
- By writing spiritual reflections in the newsletter
- By sharing spiritual reflection on the website