



## Calendar of Events

- Tues., Sept. 9** Ecumenical 9/11 Memorial, Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m.
- Sun., Sept. 14** Newcomers Brunch
- Sun., Sept. 21** Catechetical Sunday, Catechists Pot Luck, Parish Picnic
- Sun., Sept. 28** Catholic Youth Week, 10 a.m. Mass  
Alzheimers' Walk  
♦♦♦
- October** Ecumenical-Domestic Violence Month
- Sat., Oct. 4** Blessing of Animals
- Oct. 4-5** Rose sale for the Little Flower Home, Tiverton
- Mon., Oct. 13** Columbus Day
- Sat., Oct. 25** Youth Ministry Halloween Party
- Mon, Oct. 27** Blood Drive  
♦♦♦
- Tues., Nov. 11** Veteran's Day
- Sat., Nov. 15** Youth Ministry Rake &
- Sun., Nov. 23** Ecumenical Thanksgiving
- Thurs., Nov. 27** Thanksgiving Day
- Sun., Nov. 30** Advent begins

### 9/11 Memorial Service

An ecumenical memorial service, hosted by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, will be held Tuesday, Sept. 9. Lunch will be served at noon, followed by the memorial service at 12:30 p.m. There also will be an evening memorial service at 7 p.m. The church is located at 8050 Post Road, North Kingstown, RI.



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# The Buzz



August 2003

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## God's Own Land!

by Father John Cherian

Whenever I think of my own homeland (Kerala, India), I proudly call her "God's own land". However, if I were to consider any other land worthy to be called the same, it would surely be Rhode Island. When the psalmist portrays the sky and the earth as the proclamation of the glory of God, being in the State of Rhode Island, I can enjoy the amazing hands of God depicted by the Psalm.

When I decided to come to the Diocese of Providence, my professor assured me a wonderful experience.

*"I sincerely thank one and all for my amazing experiences from St. Bernard Church. When I go back to Belgium, you will be a shining lighthouse in my life and prayers."*

Father John Cherian

I was looking for a different pastoral experience for my summer holiday. When I made known my desire to the Catholic Diocese of Providence, Auxiliary Bishop Robert J. McManus responded to me immediately and told me that Fr. Dennis A. Reardon was in need of me this summer. He also mentioned in his letter that Wickford is a very fine parish for a wonderful pastoral experience during the summer. I sincerely express my gratitude to Bishop McManus for his paternal care.

Fr. Dennis and I started to communicate through e-mails. From his nice words, I came to a conclusion he would be a most friendly and loving brother. When I arrived in Providence on 5<sup>th</sup> July, he was waiting for me at the airport with a delighted smiling face. During my stay at St. Bernard Church, I can open my heart and say that I found God's own fingerprint in the heart of Fr.

Dennis. This is the fingerprint of love and care, hospitality and happiness. I can study many things from him such as the dynamism in priestly life, courage to take the challenges of life and the fundamental commitment to the priestly life. I suppose all those who are in this parish have experienced and enjoyed the priestly ministry of the man who carries God's own fingerprint in his heart.

I enjoy the wonderful love and hospitality of the people in St. Bernard Church. I love the spontaneity in your words and deeds that spring out from the fullness of heart. Your happy spirit attracts me. I appreciate your willingness to build a new church and I pray that your dream may come true in its fullness.

I sincerely thank one and all for my amazing experiences from St. Bernard Church. When I go back to Belgium, you will be a shining lighthouse in my life and prayers. We can call this land a land of lighthouses. I found many lighthouses in different beaches. I understand you like these lighthouses so much. I wish you, the St. Bernard Parish, should shine eternally and be as a lighthouse of faith, hope and love.

Father John Cherian, a priest from Kerala, India, is pursuing studies toward his doctorate in Louvain, Belgium. This summer, he has been assisting with the pastoral ministry in our parish.



# Where Goes the Futures Committee?

by Nora Hall

**T**hough the Futures Committee has been disbanded, its work is not dead. It has turned the results of its work over to the Parish Council to implement their findings.

Parishioners working on initiatives such as adult faith formation, youth education and activities, stewardship and outreach are actively working to create ways to foster the deep spiritual sharing that will nurture the needs of all members of our parish community.

At the moment, however, the steering committee studying the Davis property is the most visible group, partly because of its report in each weekly bulletin.

Tom Orsi, chair of the steering committee recently discussed the work of this group. According to Tom, necessary structural changes to the church and the parish center, for maintenance and perceived needs, would cost about \$800,000. Around the time this information was received, the Davis property was donated to the church. Consequently, it was decided to look at the feasibility of building a new church on the land, since that may be more practical than “adjusting” the existing buildings to the parish’s growing needs.

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Tom said “there appears to be an appetite for a new church and it seems that the funds would be forthcoming.” However, he continued, “a new parish church is not a given.”

The steering committee is charged with developing a master plan for the Davis property. The members will review a variety of uses, looking at the limitations of the land, parish and community needs, traffic, parking, community perception, historic value of the existing building and costs. The result of this research may recommend building a new church, but nothing is certain.

Committee members—Tom, Jane Allen, Francis Dwyer, Martha Dwyer, Arlene Gardiner, John Gibbons, Elizabeth McGrath, Walter Pannone and Ray Vallee—need your input. Let them know if you are for, or against, a new church, school and/or a specific use of the house and/or land. And, tell them why.

A new church could give us a better facility in which to worship and participate in church-related activities. However, it is not the essential ingredient to a worshipping community. Future issues of *The Buzz* will report on other committees working to make our church a strong, lively faith community.

## Faith Builds Character – and Homes

**T**he Youth Ministry workcamp team, composed of 20 parishioners—16 youth and four adults—recently joined about 400 people in Elmira, New York, to help paint homes, build decks and repair roofs for the elderly, low-income and disabled. While this physical labor amounted to about 30 hours of community service per person, the time spent learning more about themselves as individuals—and their faith—was immeasurable.

According to Dawn Biron, Youth Ministry coordinator, “(the work) was amazing and touched each one of us...to commit to bring home that feeling of satisfaction of doing God’s work by helping someone in need.” A big “thank you” goes to those involved in getting us there (the team raised more than \$2,500 for the trip), our sponsors (Statewide Mortgage Corp. and the local Job Lot) and, especially, the parent chaperones—Ann Marie Gillette, Colleen Hitchings and Jeff Smith.



Those who participated in the workcamp include (standing, 1 to r) Dawn Biron (youth ministry coordinator), Matt Alemaney, Kaitlin Hitchings, Stephanie Paretta, Ann Cardente, Dan Fanning, Maria Sayles, Cody Daluz, Kathleen Smith, Jeff Smith (chaperone), Victoria Gillette, Dennis Glasberg, Phillip Gillette, Ann Marie Gillette (chaperone), and Colleen Hitchings (chaperone) and (kneeling, 1 to r) Shalan Bates, Kelley Hitchings, Kathryn Gillette, Christina Sayles and Erin Smith.

# Haitian Project Ministry: Education Helps Children Rise to New Heights

God has a plan for each and every one of us. So, it's no "accident" when life unfolds as it does.

Marco Barbesta can attest to that. He became a volunteer for the Haitian Project, a Providence-based nonprofit organization, by overhearing a conversation at work, one that has led to a rewarding involvement with a school in Haiti.

"I worked for a computer company that had just won a bid to make computers for the Louverture Cleary School in Haiti," said Marco. "They were talking about going over to install the computers—and I volunteered to go, on the spot. Looking back, I know it wasn't about the computers, it was about the need to get involved. It was a revelation."

Since then, Marco, who oversees the Haitian Project ministry at St. Bernard's, has made about eight trips in the past six years. And, through word of mouth, the number of parishioners from St. Bernard who accompany him has grown.

According to Marco, everyone at the parish has been generous, in time, money and donations of clothing and medicines. "Parishioners have been very generous with their support at the yearly collection," said Marco, who said many people donate funds all year long. "And, just before we actually go to Haiti, we hold a drive for clothing and medicines and, again, our parishioners respond to our plea with new underwear and socks, cold and pain medicines—everyone is so generous."

The school is a coeducational boarding school for about 275 academically gifted children ages 7-13 who come from poor families—families that otherwise could not afford education. The school is open Monday through Friday (the students go home over the weekend) and its staff includes six volunteers from the United States. Its mission is to take children from the poorest neighborhoods, educate them and create future leaders for the community and Haiti.

Marco is preparing for another trip this November and will be asking for parishioners' support in many ways. "Getting involved doesn't necessarily mean going over to Haiti, though people are certainly encouraged to do that," said Marco. "There are many other ways to contribute."

Watch the bulletin for more information on the upcoming trip. For more information on what we do at St. Bernard's, call Marco at 738-3602. For more information about the Haitian Project, visit the Web site at [www.haitianproject.org](http://www.haitianproject.org) or call 521-2255, x. 54 (this is the Travelers' Aid office, so just ask for x. 54 or the Haitian Project).

According to Marco, every child deserves a chance to be the best

he or she can be—and use their talents to make the world a better place. One place to start is in Haiti.



Several parishioners took part in last year's trip to Haiti. They included (l to r) Marry Gormally, Peggy DaLuz, Pat Newell, Marco Barbesta, Lizbeth O'Brien and Gerry Grabowski, shown here with Patrick Moynihan (r), president of The Haitian Project.

## 9/11 Memorial Service

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The church is located at 8050 Post Road, North Kingstown. For more information, call the parish center at St. Bernard.

**James Gordon Thomas, MS, RTC** is the director of Clinical Services for Riverwood Mental Health Services, a non-profit agency delivering residential case management and vocational support to persons suffering from severe and persistent mental illness, in the East Bay area of the state for the past twenty years. James has 31 years of experience in the field of mental health and has been certified in Reality Therapy for the past 18 years and has been instructing programs in the area of non-violent crisis intervention since 1989. James has a Masters in counseling from the University of Rhode Island. James is also an instructor for the Rhode Island council of Community Mental Health Centers, providing training to case managers in both Reality Therapy and non-violent crisis intervention.

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## \$cholarships Help \$upport \$tudents



*Eight parishioners of St. Bernard recently were awarded \$1,000 scholarships. The recipients, honored at a mass celebrated by Rev. John Peterson, included (back row, l to r) John Keimig, Peter Bibeault, Fr. Peterson, Gary Mullaney and Brian Dungey and (front row, l to r) Michael Cessaro, Nicole Gendron and Alison Fahey. Not pictured is Mara O'Donnell. The scholarship committee, chaired by Pierre and Sue LaPerriere, raises money throughout the year by sponsoring a progressive dinner, a quilt raffle and a French-toast breakfast at Duffy's Tavern. Congratulations to these great young men and women!*

### Steering Committee Hard at Work

*The steering committee has been very busy this summer, gathering comments from parishioners and visiting local parishes. Keep up to date on its progress by reading the **Steering Committee newsletters**, found in the bulletin each Sunday and also on the Web site*

*([www.sbcwickford.org/steering\\_committee/index.html](http://www.sbcwickford.org/steering_committee/index.html)).*

*Your feedback is necessary to determine the future of the new church/parish center/school, so please send your comments and thoughts to [steering\\_committee@sbcwickford.com](mailto:steering_committee@sbcwickford.com) or call the parish center at 295-0387.*