

MY SON  
WINE & BRANCHES  
RESURRECTION  
OPERATION CANCELLED.  
SHE BREATHEES.  
August-September 2009 \$3.00  
THE PEOPLE OF PRAISE. CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY!  
HIS EYES BLINK. PRAYER IN STRANGE  
HIS HANDS MOVE. HE CONTINUES. THESE PEOPLE WALKING PAST, IT'S OVER  
A PHONE CALL BRINGS TREATMENT. TOWARD ME BENDING, FORM  
THAT I HOPED TO MEET  
TELL NO ONE. JOIN THE LORD—  
I NEED YOU. BUT THERE,  
ON THE MACHINE,  
STRONG HEART THUMPS,  
OUR SON  
ARISE.  
IT FEELS, LOOKS 45 THE DOCTOR SAYS.  
OUR SON  
JESUS IS  
ALIVE!  
A LOOK—RISE AND FALL  
THREE SPACES DOWN  
A PRAYER  
STRAIGHT SHOULDERS  
MY BACK FLIPS.  
THIS IS NOT DEATH, I SAY.  
TIME  
OUR RIDE HOME  
MOUTHS WIDE SPEAKING  
I SEE THE SPIRIT WIELD A SURGEON'S SCALPEL  
SCRAPING, SMOOTHING MY ARTHRITIC KNEE  
shaking hands, a microphone, words crack and  
MY FOOT  
FOUR MINUTES, NOW I MAKE CHANGE  
LIKE NEW CLASSES, I'M WATCHING IF YOU CAN ONLY  
EVERYTHING CLICKS. BELIEVE!

# Back Flips

Raquel, 10, has a long, thin frame and bushy pigtails. She was a regular at last year's People of Praise Allendale summer day camp, but this summer she almost didn't make it through camp's first few days.

When camp staffers went to her house to pick her up for the first day, her brother said she couldn't come—she had scoliosis and her back hurt too much. Later that morning she did hobble her way over to camp, but she passed the day sitting alone at a picnic table, watching the rope-jumping and Charades and not smiling the way she usually did. Raquel told camp leader Claire Holovaty that she'd spent a few days in the hospital with back pain.

Raquel came to camp again a few days later with strict orders from her mother not to run or jump. That morning, Claire saw her lying on the sidewalk, clutching her knees in pain. Claire asked if they could pray for her back. Raquel sat up and a crew of campers and staff gathered. Claire put her hands on Raquel's hunched shoulders and pulled them back slowly till they were aligned straight. When the prayer was finished, Claire let go, and Raquel's back and shoulders stayed straight. "Is it better?," Claire asked. "Yes," Raquel said.

Half an hour after the prayer, camp staffer Mary Mertz saw Raquel jump off a three-foot-high retaining wall. The next day, Raquel ran, jumped, hula-hooped and even

pulled off some back flips. "We were celebrating her healing all day long," Claire says, "and every time we told her, 'Jesus healed your back!' she gave this huge smile."

Raquel didn't sit in pain at her lonely picnic table for the rest of the summer. ■

From left, Jeanette Zimmer (Allendale) and Raquel



Raquel

**HOOPS WHIRRING**  
clutching knees  
i'm watching **ALONE**  
**A PRAYER**  
**STRAIGHT SHOULDERS**  
**MY BACK FLIPS**



Amanda Lauer

From left, Kathy and Norm Hippert (Appleton) and their son Andrew

# UNDER UN OUR SON! WATER, RESPONSIVE MISSING WORDS, PRAYER IN STRANGE SYLLABLES.

**“THIS IS NOT DEATH,” I SAY.  
BUT WHEN THEY CALL  
I HEAR DEATH.  
MOUTHS WIDE, THEY SPEAK,  
“HIS EYES BLINK.  
HIS HANDS MOVE,” HE CONTINUES.**

## Blink

*additional reporting by Amanda Lauer*

Just before 10:00 on a Sunday morning in late May, Norm Hippert (Appleton) was kneeling in a pew as usual. But the church was just across the street from St. Elizabeth Hospital, and Norm’s prayers were for the life of his 25-year-old son Andrew.

Six hours earlier, about 4:00, the phone had rung at the Hippert’s home. Andrew, visiting Wisconsin from California for a wedding, had been found unconscious at the bottom of a hotel swimming pool. No one knew just how long he’d been under water.

He was unresponsive at poolside and still unresponsive at the hospital. His doctors, fearing that he might die quickly, began investigating whether his organs might be harvested to save someone else’s life. “There is simply not much going on in there,” one doctor said, referring to Andrew’s brain.

Kathy Hippert had a different sense, though. There was something going on—the Lord loved her son Andrew and this day wasn’t going to be his last. “This is not unto death,” she told Norm confidently.

The Hipperts began calling family members and brothers and sisters in the Appleton branch. Many rushed to the hospital, until a crowd of about 25 had gathered in a waiting room, praying aloud and in tongues for Andrew’s life.

Andrew was tethered to a ventilator in Intensive Care. Norm remembers the neurosurgeon explaining that the only hope was to try to cool

Andrew’s body to 90 or 92 degrees. The cooling might stimulate his brain, but it might also trigger a heart attack. It looked like their best option, so the Hipperts gave their go-ahead.

That’s when Norm and a few of their grown children crossed the street for mass, while Kathy waited with other friends in the hospital. A few minutes later, doctors called her back into Andrew’s room. “I remember thinking, they’re going to tell me he’s dead,” she says.

Instead, they said Andrew had opened his eyes. He had blinked in response to some questions and even moved his hands slightly. The doctors were changing his prognosis. Instead of cooling him down, they wanted to prepare him for back surgery—one of the discs in his back was pulverized. He was going to live.

As cheers and shouts erupted in the waiting room, Tim Hippert ran to the church to tell his dad the good news. Andrew’s other siblings couldn’t contain themselves and rushed back to the hospital. But Norm lingered at the church until the end of mass to praise and thank God. “I was filled with joy that Andrew wasn’t dying,” he says.

That evening one of the ER nurses threw her arms around Kathy. “This is not what normally happens,” she said. “I thought it was over for him.”

The nurse asked Kathy about her faith. “I can’t believe the way you prayed,” she said. Kathy had to

explain herself, “I’m a laying-on-of-hands, speaking-in-tongues, praising-out-loud, raising-hands and Bible-reading Catholic!”

Six days after the accident, Andrew checked into a rehab facility, and in late July he moved in with his friend Mark Lee in Appleton. Today, he can dress himself and eat with silverware, though he has trouble clenching his hands. His legs remain largely frozen, but he can wiggle his toes and rotate his left foot at the ankle. He gets around in a wheelchair and is determined to continue his recovery.

“My family raised me to appreciate the Lord,” he says. “I have a very strong faith and belief in God. I will continue. He’s held me up so far.” ■

From left, Andrew, Kathy and Norm



# Sleeping

Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As he went, the people pressed round him. . . .

While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more."

But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." And

when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.

And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him, knowing she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened (Lk. 8:40-42; 49-56). ■

my 12-year-old daughter's  
and i'm pleading, **DYING**  
falling at the feet of some stranger, saying, "just lay your hands."

**BACK HE FOLLOWS ME THROUGH PRESSED BODIES,  
THE VOICES SAYING SHE'S DEAD,  
THE CACKLING BLACK-CLAD WOMEN.**

LEADING NOW, UP TO HER ROOM,  
REPEATING A PHRASE  
UNKNOWN TO MY HEAD, **"SHE'S  
SLEEPING,"**

but I see her stilled stomach  
**RISE** and fall,  
fall and **RISE** where he rests his hand.

**SHE BREATHES, THEN HE BREATHES,  
"TELL NO ONE."**

# Four-Minute Miracle



Ten-year-old Bridget Whelpley (northern Virginia) slipped and fell during a soccer game last October, and the ball rolled to a stop beside her head. Another player, aiming

for the ball, kicked the back of Bridget's head instead. She got up, kept playing and finished the game, but within 24 hours it was obvious that she had suffered a severe concussion. Her head exploded in pain. Even soft noises like the clicking of a computer keyboard disturbed her. The pain didn't go away in a day or even a week.

Worse, more injuries followed—a nasty string of troubles that lasted several months and brought Bridget and her parents John and Patty to bewildered desperation.

First, her head injury triggered a recurrence of Lyme disease, causing spasms in her legs. Then she stepped on a needle and a tiny piece lodged in her foot, requiring surgery. Her headache medicine produced a bleeding ulcer, and the pain in her head continued. The prognosis was vague. It might take months or years for her head to recover, doctors said.

"The People of Praise rallied to our aid with plenty of prayer and practical help," Patty says. "John was out of town for some of this, so community members assisted me with babysitting and other errands."

The Whelpleys had help, but not answers. Then Patty read a prayer request in a homeschool association newsletter for a girl suffering from a concussion. The intention was anonymous, but Patty was moved to call the mother, so she asked for her name. When she called, she discovered that she had once known her.

The mother told Patty about a new treatment for head injuries involving low-energy neurostimulation. Only a few doctors did it well, and one of them practiced in nearby Bethesda, Maryland.

Bridget began the new treatment. She showed some minor improvement over her first eight treatments, but then something extraordinary happened. The ninth treatment lasted just four minutes. When it was over, in Bridget's words, everything "clicked." "It was like putting glasses on for the first time, but inside my head," she says. Her headache disappeared and loud noises no longer rankled.

"We tested it by going to a noisy kid-oriented restaurant that would bother anyone, and she was fine," Patty says. "She could think clearly enough then that she made up eight months of schoolwork in

**A SOCCER GAME BRINGS PAIN EXPLODES MORE WOUNDS**  
AND MONTHS THAT BRING NO ANSWERS.

A PHONE CALL BRINGS TREATMENT.  
**FOUR MINUTES,**  
LIKE NEW GLASSES,  
EVERYTHING **CLICKS.**

two months!"

Patty asked the staff whether four-minute miracles were common. They said a 180-degree change wasn't unusual, but that the improvements normally came in modest steps over many treatments. They'd never seen

such a dramatic turnaround in just four minutes.

"While she was sick, Bridget had been desperately clinging to a goal—attending Buffalo Camp this summer," Patty says. "Praise God! She went to camp and had the time of her life!" ■

## Holy Spirit Operation

Indianapolis South Side resident Linda Oakes is amazed at everything the Lord has done for her. "I've been with the Lord and walked away from him so many times that I was surprised he would do anything more for me. But he's really blessed me this year since I met the missionaries."

Last year, the Lord healed Linda's migraine headaches. (See the October-November, 2008, *V&B*.) Now he's healed her knees.

For at least 30 years, arthritis has been attacking her knee joints, making walking a challenge. Linda was scheduled for surgery in June to relieve the pain, but eight days before the procedure, on Pentecost Sunday, she went to an Indianapolis branch meeting where a group of people prayed with her.

When they laid hands on her right knee, Linda felt a brief sharp pain. "I imagined the Holy Spirit doing surgery on me—removing old cartilage and replacing it with new," she says.

where they rest their hands **I FEEL PAIN!**

I SEE THE SPIRIT WIELD A SURGEON'S SCALPEL,  
**SCRAPING, SMOOTHING MY ARTHRITIC KNEE.**

seconds pass, it's over and I test it,

**BENDING, STRETCHING** THE 65-YEAR-OLD JOINT.

**IT FEELS, LOOKS 45**  
THE DOCTOR SAYS

**AND CANCELS THE OPERATION.**

From left, Ellen Reed (Indianapolis) and Linda Oakes



Liz Loughran

# Rest Stop Rendezvous

Afterward, feeling no pain in her knee, Linda stood up, testing it. She stepped forward, gingerly at first, and then more confidently. She stretched her faith and kept walking. The pain was definitely gone.

When her landlady noticed that the swelling in her right knee had subsided, Linda explained that the Lord had healed her. "Wow! I didn't know God did that!" the landlady said.

Linda's doctor also noticed the reduced swelling, and when her knee specialist looked at a new X-ray he said there was no scarring. Linda had the knee of a normal 45-year-old, he said. (She is 65.) Surgery was cancelled.

Linda realized her left knee still hurt, so her women's group prayed over it, about a week after the Pentecost meeting. "I remember during the prayer Shelly Gilliam's hand felt like fire, and then the pain was gone," Linda says. "I shouted out, 'My other knee is healed!'"

A few days later, Linda was lying in bed, afraid to get up because of the pain she thought was surely inevitable. "I was believing a lie from Satan that I hadn't really been healed, that the pain would be back. But I got out of bed anyway and felt fine!" ■

Kevin Daly, Ben Reinhardt and Chris Milliren (all Servant Branch) spent Sunday, July 5, driving from Indianapolis to the Twin Cities in a silver Mazda. In Wisconsin—about four hours from Minneapolis—Chris woke up from a nap, felt hot, and noticed the air-conditioner had quit. He glanced at the temperature gauge. The engine was running hot.

Kevin pulled the car into the next rest stop and the men popped the hood, but they couldn't locate the trouble. Kevin began rifling through the owner's manual. Then he glanced up and saw two people he recognized in a car three parking spots away.

The same day, engaged couple Bart Durand and Mary Gaffney (Servant Branch) were driving back to the Twin Cities from a visit to Mary's relatives on Wisconsin's Delavan Lake. "All kinds of things affected our timing that day," Mary says. "I was getting impatient at all the delays because of holiday traffic. At one point we waited in line 20 minutes just to get gas."

Bart and Mary arrived at the rest stop just a few minutes behind the silver Mazda.

After the reunion with their

friends, Mary spotted the problem with the car—a puddle under the engine. The coolant pump had sprung a leak.

A few minutes later a stranger walked up and offered some advice. If the leak was slow, he said, the men could limp back, pausing every 40 miles to pour water in the radiator. He had some spare coolant, which they poured in, letting the engine idle so it could filter through the system. Bart and Mary went on ahead, but 45 minutes later the men called them back. They were still at the rest stop with an engine that wouldn't cool.

Bart and Mary fought their way back through heavy traffic, and then waited with Chris, Kevin and Ben for a tow truck to arrive. The truck towed the Mazda to a garage in Tomah, WI, and Bart and Mary drove Chris, Kevin and Ben back to Minnesota.

Later in the week, Chris's Dad and brother picked up the repaired Mazda and brought it safely home.

"I was amazed at how Bart and Mary arrived just when we needed them. The Lord was working to get us a ride home, before we even knew our car had a problem," Chris says. ■

From left, Chris Milliren, Bart Durand, Mary Gaffney, Kevin Daly, Ben Reinhardt (all Servant Branch)



provided by Mary Gaffney

**A HOT ENGINE,  
A STOP, A LEAK,  
A PUDDLE, NO PLAN,  
A LOOK —  
THREE SPACES DOWN  
RIGHT ON  
TIME OUR RIDE  
HOME**

you know how worried i am.  
**THIS BACK BRACE  
THIS GRANDBABY  
TO CARE FOR  
THESE PEOPLE WALKING  
TOWARD ME  
THAT I HOPED TO MEET  
YOUR ANSWER?**

## Church Meeting

When the Catholic students in the Dinkytown campus division go to church together they usually make an impression: a dozen or more students packed in one or two pews early on Sunday morning. Bronwen Hudelston, a regular at St. Lawrence Catholic Church, had noticed the students and hoped to find out more about them and their faith.

But she had other things on her mind during one mass in mid-June: her chronic back pain had flared up. She prayed silently, "Jesus, you know how worried I am that I cannot take care of my granddaughter if my back is really bad. Please find me

some help."

During the service Colleen Murray noticed the back brace she wore, and how she stayed seated throughout the service. Afterward she whispered to campus division sister Kathleen Mehaffey, "I want to go pray for that woman." They introduced themselves to Bronwen. "Do pray for my back to be healed," Bronwen said, "so I can take care of my granddaughter and free up her mother to go to work."

Bronwen called Colleen on Monday. "She said she was feeling better," Colleen recalls, "and she asked me to come over and tell her about

the People of Praise and what we're doing in Dinkytown." Colleen visited the house but noticed that Bronwen was still wearing the brace, so she prayed with her again.

"The next day, I got an e-mail from Bronwen saying that, for the first time since she started having back pain, she had zero pain and was giving God all the glory."

At the next Sunday's mass, some of the folks at church asked Bronwen why she wasn't wearing her brace. She spoke up loudly. The Lord had healed her through the prayers of Colleen and Kathleen, her new friends in Dinkytown. ■

From left, Bronwen Hudelston, her granddaughter Wynter, Kathleen Mehaffey (Servant Branch)



Amy Rice

ALL THIS TIME,  
**LIMPING**  
 DOWN STAIRS ON  
**THESE ANKLES.**  
 shaking hands,  
 a microphone,  
 words crack and **MY FOOT**  
**MENDS.**



Mary Seale

From left, Edna Malone and Debbie Mixell (both South Bend)

## Ankles

Debbie Mixell (South Bend), a product specialist for the LaSalle Company, usually sits at a desk that's surrounded by gray metal shelves piled high with sample Bibles and religion textbooks. But when customer phone calls for product information taper off and the catalogs are all updated, she walks over to the warehouse to pitch in there.

In early June, she was moving some boxes in the warehouse when she felt her ankle turn. "It was the kind of thing that I thought would be sore for a while and then just get well on its own," she says. "I've had

trouble with my ankles all my life. I wore corrective shoes when I was a child, doing all kinds of exercises to strengthen my feet and ankles, even going to physical therapy."

She took ibuprofen, tried to forget about the pain and didn't mention the injury to her household until the following Sunday, when someone saw her limping down the stairs. "It was getting worse, not better, as the days went on," she says.

That afternoon at the community meeting, Edna Malone (South Bend) felt like the Lord wanted her to get up and speak a word to the group. She

was nervous, since she didn't have a clear idea of what she was going to say, and gripped the microphone with shaking hands. Then she said the Lord wanted to heal a number of maladies, including a misaligned ankle.

"When Edna said someone's ankle was being put back into alignment, the pain stopped right away," Debbie says. "I didn't say anything then because I thought the pain would probably come back. But it didn't, and it still hasn't." ■

**A RIP-OFF ARTIST,**  
 I SKIM CHANGE.  
**A NOT-MAN**  
 WIDELY APPRECIATED,  
 an image, function, specter.  
**THIS INVISIBLE**  
**BURNING**  
 unreal until he says,  
**"TONIGHT,**  
**YOUR HOUSE."**  
 NOW I MAKE CHANGE  
 GIVE CHANGE  
 I CHANGE.

## Change

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zaccheaus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zaccheaus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today."

So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."

And Zaccheaus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Lk. 19:1-10). ■



# Team Change

Indianapolis missionary Rus Lyons had forgotten what had happened the first time he'd knocked on this particular apartment door—a muscular young man had slammed it shut when he heard the word, "Jesus." By the time he remembered the encounter, Rus had already knocked a second time.

The same shirtless man came out and kept the door open for 45 minutes. "It's strange that you're here now," he said after a while. "I've been having hard times lately. I think God sent you. Tell me about how to hear God speak and how I can understand the Bible."

Rus started explaining, talking about how God wants to save the world, and how he wants to save the South Side, eventually asking Jimmy how he'd like to respond.

"I need to join the Lord!" Jimmy said. "Well, I guess you're changing teams now," Rus answered. "You're joining God's team, and it would be a good idea to ask forgiveness for the things you've done to offend him."

Jimmy knelt down in the hallway and began to confess involvement with drug dealing, guns and robberies. "Look, I'm so shook up my hands are sweaty!" he said. Rus answered, "That's the Holy Spirit at work in you, not me."

"I know—you're not that intimidating!" Jimmy replied.

He said he felt lighter, and he began smiling and laughing. His friends later remarked that he'd never seemed happier. A few months later, Jimmy was prayed with for baptism in the Spirit.

He's moved to a healthier living situation now, far from his old neighborhood—and he still keeps in contact with Rus and the other missionaries.

"I'd had 26 years of sadness," he says of his life. "From age 15 to 17, I lived in a boys' home, and ever since then I've been in a loop—I'd get ahead, then fall off and end up in jail. I was on a bad path and I wanted something different. I was stressed out when Rus knocked on the door. I thought he was a persistent Jesus



Liz Loughran

From left, Jimmy and Rus Lyons (Indianapolis)

## DRUG-DEALING AND ROBBING LOOPING from home to jail and back to home again,

### A KNOCK CUTS MY FOCUS AND SOME STRANGER, SOME FREAK, SAYS

# “JOIN THE LORD— I NEED YOU.”

## MY SWEAT BREAKS, SMILES BREAK AND THIS LOOP BREAKS.

freak. But his visit was the Lord's way of bringing me to a better place."

"I've done great after meeting the Lord. I can smile at myself in the mirror. I love the Lord and I love people. I have a new job, own my own car and a home. I thank the Lord every day."

Rus says, "Jimmy has introduced us to more South Siders and to some of his family members who need the Lord. He's joyful and forgiving, and the Lord's not done with him yet!" ■

# Barb Mixell

by Debbie Mixell

A few days before Barb died, the deacon from her church came to visit her at home. After a cancer diagnosis, radiation treatments and chemotherapy, not to mention three major surgeries, a minor stroke and other complications, she was largely confined to a hospital bed in her living room. Before he left, the deacon knelt down beside her bed. My mom put her hands on his head and prayed that the Lord would give him all he needed for his ministry. Though her breathing was labored, she still cared for others—like Christ did when he struggled for breath on the cross.

Barb was born into a large farm family in Muncie, Indiana, in 1934. She and Ron met in high school and married at the end of college, where she received her degree in English education. My sister and brothers and I came along in quick succession. Fortunately for us, my mom wanted a home that looked “lived in.” Though the house was clean and bright, making kids and friends feel easy and comfortable was more important to her than having every magazine lined up perfectly on the coffee table. She could name every child and dog in the neighborhood.

She really enjoyed nature, and in particular my parents loved the mountains. One of her proudest moments was getting through the boulder field on 14,000+ foot Long’s Peak in Colorado. Once, on an overnight

**She enjoyed life as it was, and didn’t waste time wishing things were different.**

trip to Colorado to visit my brother Andy, Mom was asleep in the back of the van when Dad pulled into a gas station. After paying for the gas, he didn’t realize Mom had gotten out too, and drove off without her. Two hours later, he arrived back. Her comment, climbing into the van: “Nice sunrise.” She enjoyed life as it was, and didn’t waste time wishing things



were different.

Mom was always eager to do her part: den mother for Cub Scouts, trainer of new lectors for the parish, member of the Delaware County Committee for Integrity Enhancement, polling assistant on Election Day, a champion blood donor. Susan Coleman (Muncie) once asked her, “Would you teach quilling to the Girls of Praise?” “Well, I don’t know what quilling is,” she replied, “but I’ll learn,” and she did.

In 1975, my parents attended a parish Life in the Spirit Seminar, and in 1978 were founding members of the community that is now the Muncie branch. Mom

served in music ministry, as local editor for *Vine & Branches*, as women’s group leader, head and handmaid. In 1991, she left her job at Anderson University to work part-time in the branch office at minimum wage. Tom Schmitt, principal branch coordinator at the time, said, “She just wanted to be more involved in community life, have more interaction with brothers

and sisters.”

When her mother and mother-in-law were living in different nursing homes, she visited often, took them to appointments, ran errands with them. But she wanted to do these things with more joy. Her strategy: add another person. She chose a stranger in a third nursing home and visited her weekly.

Her thoughtfulness always amazed me. Out shopping, she acknowledged every cashier and clerk with a compliment or some personal comment. When Julie Peresie, a girl in the Muncie branch, was recovering from surgery, Mom gave her a coveted pair of high-heeled shoes from the dress-up clothes she kept around for young ladies. After I joined the Sisterhood, she would regularly welcome 12+ women into her home, preparing Lord’s Day dinner and Sunday brunch and making places for everyone to sleep: on floors, on sofas, in the camper in the driveway.

My parents also regularly invited unattached people to family events. A widowed co-worker, a college student far from home, the friend of a friend—each found a place at the Mixell table for Thanksgiving or Easter.

My mom taught me to sing, to bake cookies, to write thank-you notes. She taught me to be faithful to my commitments. My siblings and I have very different personalities, yet each of us knew Mom understood us uniquely. Her love for us and for Dad was rock solid.

Speaking at her funeral, Tom quoted playwright George Bernard Shaw to describe her attitude: “. . . my life belongs to the whole community and, as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die.”

I’ve heard women comment laughingly that they are turning into their mothers. If that’s true in my case, I will be very happy. ■

# Bob Hackel

by Jim Ganther

Tampa branch member Bob Hackel died suddenly on June 14, less than 24 hours after completing a two-week Action trip to Indianapolis. The news that our good brother, so full of energy and humor, had entered into rest came as a tremendous shock to those who knew and loved him. “Bob” and “rest” are two words that almost never appear in the same sentence.

Bob was born and raised in the Twin Cities. After a stint with the Army in Korea, he married Kathy Lyman in 1955. They raised a family that grew to seven children while Bob pursued an engineering degree at the University of Minnesota and a 35-year career at Sperry Univac. Their family knew debilitating illness and the death of their daughter Mary, but their home was also filled with music and love and fun. (Bob was a gifted amateur clown—one of the first to play Ronald McDonald in the upper Midwest.)

He was a generous man even before he came to know the Lord. While living in Prescott, Wisconsin, during the 1970s (when you could buy groceries on personal credit), he would leave money with the local grocer for those who had trouble paying. No one knew this but the grocer and Bob’s kids, who witnessed these transactions and spilled the beans after he died.

Kathy got involved in local charismatic prayer meetings in the early 1970s and encouraged Bob to attend with her. He demurred, quipping, “I don’t need group therapy.” But one night he went, and the leader invited those who had never accepted the Lord into their hearts to do so. Bob fell to his knees and got up a changed man. As Kathy recalls, in the following months the Lord’s kindness often moved him to tears. He also began to memorize large swathes of Scripture. Sometimes he would quote a passage and then open his well-worn Bible to make sure he got the citation right. In all the years I knew him, he only

missed one time: he knew the book and chapter spot-on, but he missed the verse number.

Bob and Kathy eventually joined Servants of the Lord in the Twin Cities, and Bob became a leader. But his arthritis and the allure of early retirement led the Hackels to move to Florida in the early 1980s. They spent the summer months back with family and old friends in Hastings, Minnesota. After they encountered the Tampa branch, they joined the People of Praise and made the covenant January 5, 2003.

Bob made friends continuously, even with the young. He often golfed with my sons John and Tim. They are 18 and 17, but Bob was truly their friend. Age was irrelevant. He was young at heart, and never talked down to anyone.

And Bob did talk, a lot, about his family, his Packers football team and fine red wines from V. Sattui Winery. And he talked about his faith. Always his faith. He loved God and he believed God was loveable and he wanted to share that love. If you complained about something he would always ask, “Well, didja pray?” If the answer was no, he’d offer to pray with you then and there. Of course, this had two noticeable effects: people encountered the love of God, and they stopped complaining when Bob was around.

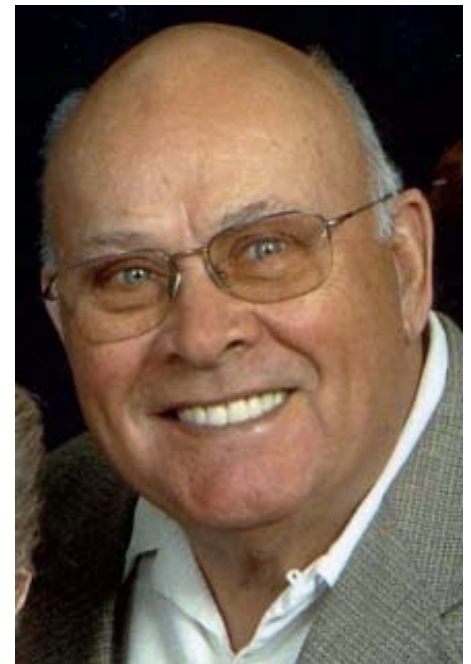
Bob was a marvelous and eager servant. Retirement for him meant time to serve others. He was a big deal in their retirement community in Dunedin, Florida. When someone needed something done, that someone called Bob and Bob grabbed his tools. Windows repaired, doors hung, plumbing installed—he would do it all.

Bob worked tirelessly for the People of Praise and its Action outreach. In the past five summers, he

helped build and repair houses four times in Shreveport. Bob used his many skills and shared his experience, but it was his humor and good cheer that made him such a beloved figure among the Action staff and volunteers. One Action participant in his 20s put it well: “Bob was the coolest old guy I ever met.”

The time of Bob’s passing was too soon for our wishes, but it seems fitting that he served until his last breath. He was pressing on, full-bore, until he had given all he had to give. ■

“Bob” and “rest” are two words that almost never appear in the same sentence.



# LifeNotes

In the last issue, *V&B* reported that Eagle Scout Danny Thomas is the son of Rick and Ann Thomas. He is, of course, the son of Dan and Shari Thomas. We apologize for the error.

■ **Pete and Megan Sgroi** (South Bend) are rejoicing in God's gift of their son **John Matthew**, born July 22.

■ **Matt and Carrie Urbanski** (South Bend) are thanking God for the safe arrival of their daughter **Lauren**, who was born in Haiti September 28, 2006, and arrived at her new home May 29.

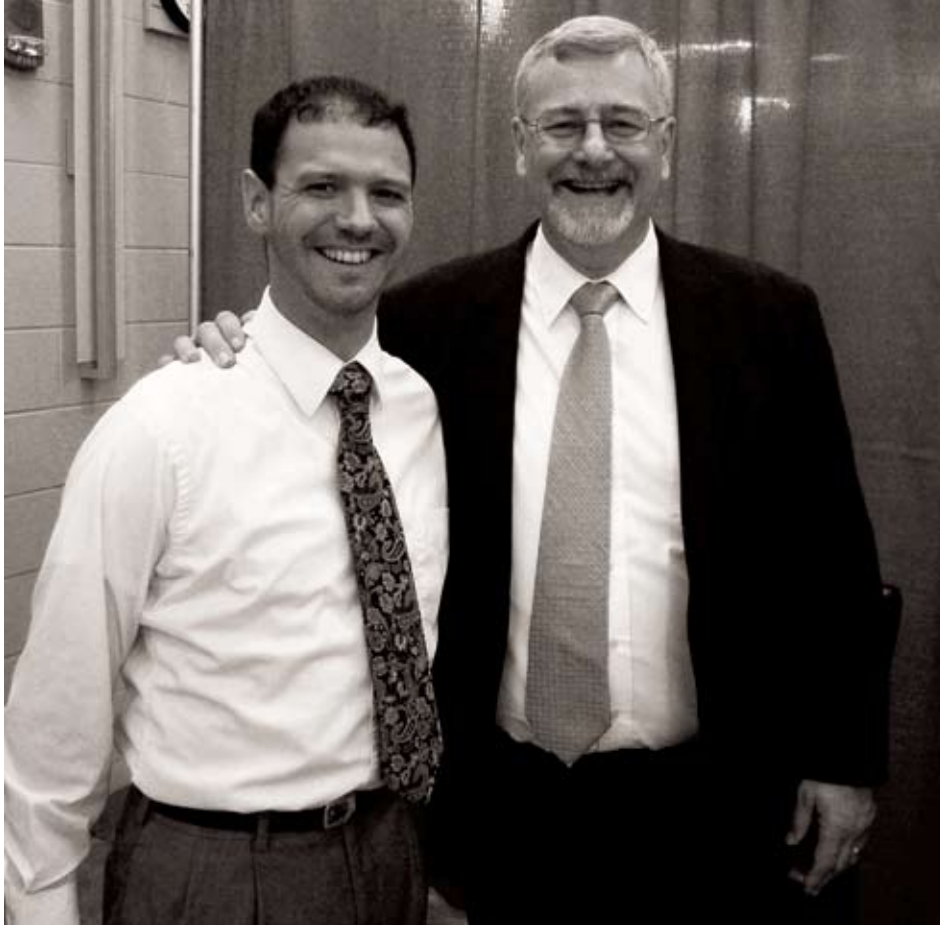
■ **Tom and Karen Saverine** have been transferred from the branch in Colorado Springs to the branch in South Bend, effective when they arrive in September.

■ **Cathy McAleer** has been transferred from the South Bend branch to the branch in northern Virginia, effective when she arrives in September.

■ **Mark and Maria DeMicoli** (northern Virginia) have been given an assignment to Malta for three years.

■ Congratulations to **Sean Couch**, son of Brian and Beth Couch (South Bend), who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout at a court of honor on June 13.

From left, Dennis Staffelbach, Eagle Scout Sean Couch, Larry Grauvogel (all South Bend)



From left, Jon Balsbaugh, Bill Wacker (both Servant Branch)

## River Ridge Update

by Kerry Koller

I am delighted to announce that Bill Wacker (Servant Branch), who has served Trinity Schools for 24 years as an excellent teacher and provided dynamic leadership as headmaster for 22 of those years, has taken a new position as vice-president for development at the River Ridge campus.

Bill gave great leadership to the recent River Ridge Capital Campaign, and his instincts and talents for fundraising were immediately apparent. In his new role, he has taken responsibility for completing the Capital Campaign and for donor development. Bill has done a great job

in each of his Trinity School appointments and I know that he will do the same in this new role.

I am also delighted to appoint Jon Balsbaugh (Servant Branch) as new headmaster at River Ridge. Jon has served on the River Ridge faculty for 14 years. During that time, he has distinguished himself as an exceptional teacher and leader of the faculty. Jon began serving as an area coordinator in Servant Branch in January, 2008, and continued in that position until he was appointed Servant Branch division coordinator for Trinity School in July, 2009. He and his wife Jennifer have five children.

■ **John and Eileen Timler** have been assigned to Greene County, IN, for two years, until May 4, 2011, so John can work for SAIC as a senior engineer. They remain members of the New Orleans branch.

Since our last issue, three community members have died. We join with their families and friends in their sorrow at this time of loss, and we pray especially for their spouses and children.

■ **Ethel Chalk**, South Bend, July 1.

■ **Dave Temeles**, Northern Virginia, July 21.

■ **Shirley Butler**, Servant Branch, August 19.

Congratulations and hurrahs for these brothers and sisters, who recently received college degrees:

■ **Collin Anderson**, University of Minnesota, B.S. in computer science.

■ **Kevin Daly**, University of Minnesota, Carlson School of Management, B.S. in management information systems and entrepreneurial studies.

■ **Abby Earhart**, Minneapolis Community and Technical College, Associate's Degree in culinary arts.

■ **Lisa Ficker**, Saint Mary's College, B.S. in computational mathematics.

■ **Elizabeth Grondin**, University of Evansville, Bachelor of Music Performance, Suzuki Pedagogy Certificate and iBASE Certificate.

■ **Anna Hagens**, University of Minnesota, B.S. in recreation, park and leisure studies.

■ **Angie Hass**, University of Minnesota, B.S. in housing studies.

■ **Paul Hommes**, University of Notre Dame, B.S. in mechanical engineering.

■ **Colleen Murray**, University of Minnesota Institute of Technology, B.S. in mathematics.

■ **Alicia Pozarski**, University of Minnesota, B.A. in history.

■ **Gianna Priolo**, University of Minnesota, B.A. in Spanish and a certificate and minor in Teaching English as a Second Language.

### From the Executive Office:

#### *Corvallis:*

Phil Monaco has been appointed to a six-year term as principal branch coordinator, effective October 1, 2009.

#### *Oahu:*

Tom Duddy has been appointed to a third term as principal branch coordinator, after receiving a dispensation from the board of governors allowing him to stand for election again. His six-year term of office will begin October 1, 2009.

#### *Servant Branch:*

Jon Balsbaugh, the new head of school of Trinity School at River Ridge, has been appointed as division coordinator in Servant Branch for Trinity School, effective July 1, 2009.

#### *South Bend:*

Christine Stahl was released from the covenant of the People of Praise on June 29, 2009.

From left, Pat Ficker (Servant Branch), graduate Lisa Ficker (South Bend), Patricia Ficker (Servant Branch)



*People of Praise Vine & Branches* is published monthly by the People of Praise community for its members. Reprint permission must be obtained before use. Please contact Sean Connolly, 107 S. Greenlawn, South Bend, IN 46617; e-mail [thevine@peopleofpraise.org](mailto:thevine@peopleofpraise.org) or phone 574-234-5088 or fax 574-236-6633.

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South Bend, IN 46617

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**“There is hope for your future, says the Lord” (Jer. 31:17).**



**From left, Courtney, Treshawn, Luke Olson and Shamareio chip away at a patch of unwanted concrete in Allendale.**