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## EAST CENTRAL REGION, ACPE

**Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio & Pittsburgh, PA.**

May 2004

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June Newsletter Deadline

Regional Director:  
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[www.ecr-acpe.org](http://www.ecr-acpe.org)

### Is Anybody Up There?

It was the winter of 1961-62. I was driving across Indiana on U. S. Route 40 by myself in my 1956 Chevrolet Bel Aire, four door hard top (ivory over turquoise for those of you who remember). As you might guess, I loved that car. It was an instant classic when it was introduced and still is today.

The road that day was snow and ice covered and slick. Route 40 was only two lanes in that area in those days. The wind was blowing across the road in strong gusts. As I topped the crest of one of those rolling undulations that are typical of that country, the car came unglued from the slippery surface and began to fishtail. It was drifting ever closer to the deep drainage culvert on the right side of the road. Gently I tried to steer it back to the road. As I coaxed the car back to the left I overcorrected and now was headed straight for the oncoming traffic lane, which was fully occupied by an enormous semi. To this day, I remember those few seconds vividly: "I cried out loud in a fear-thickened voice, "Oh God, No!" Almost too terrified to move a muscle, I inched the wheel the other direction. For an agonizing few seconds that seemed an eternity, the car hesitated and then, finally, gradually, it began to move to the right. I was going to miss the oncoming truck, but I was not going to be able to keep the car on the road. With relief I committed my beautiful car to the drainage ditch that now looked so desirable when only a few moments before I was trying so hard to avoid it. I slid joyously over the edge as the truck rumbled harmlessly by on the road above me. With a jolt my car came to rest against the opposite bank. I sat behind the wheel trembling and so grateful to be alive that whatever damage was done to the car seemed a small price to pay. A farmer on his tractor saw me from a nearby field and came over and pulled my car out of the ditch. After determining that I had nothing worse than a bent bumper, I continued on my way.

I have gone back more than forty years to tell you that story only because it is easier to relate this "old" story than to tell you of more recent experiences in which I realize, in reflecting after the fact, that it was through no skill or prudence on my part that I was not killed. At the time this occurred, I do not think I attributed my survival to divine intervention. In fact, I think it is very difficult to demonstrate that it is Providence, or any sort of Divine or supernatural intervention when we are spared the full consequences of our careless, foolish or risky behavior. Scientifically, we cannot deduce a cause by an outcome (or lack of one). There is an old joke about a man standing on a busy city street corner clapping his hands. When asked what he was doing, he replied, "I'm keeping the elephants away." His inquisitor objected, "but there are no elephants around here." To which the clapping man said, "I'm doing a good job, don't you think?"

**Supervisory Education  
In the Region**

**Associate Supervisors**

Rhonda Gilligan Gillespie  
Lonnie E. Long

**Supervisory Candidates**

Ruth Alpers  
Ed Bastien  
Carrie Cullen  
Bill Foster  
Donald Harris  
James Mitchell  
Evans Mulima  
Jon Paulus  
Joe Roberts  
Pat Sheldon Ward  
Tim Waits  
Frank Woggon

**Officers of the Region**

Frank Ciampa, Director  
Katherine Nininger, Chair  
Lin Barnett, Vice Chair  
Rhonda Gilligan-Gillespie,  
Accreditation  
Carol Reynolds Green, Board  
of Reps  
Frank Impicciche, Board of  
Reps  
Bob Uken, Budget &  
Investment  
Mary Burks-Price, Certification  
Co-Chair  
Michael Rice Saxton,  
Certification Co-Chair  
Carl DeMeritt, Clinical  
Members Co-Chair  
Martha Amann, Clinical  
Members Co-Chair  
\_\_\_\_\_, History  
Earl Hoppert, Long Range  
Development  
Daryl Hanson, Nominations  
Carl Buxo, Professional Ethics  
Billie Beverly, REM  
Celia Thurston, Research  
Karl VanHam, Standards

For those of you who have taken Logic, you will recall that this is the logical fallacy called: *after which, therefore because of which*. When we are looking at the possibility that there is some intervention in our lives that sometimes spares us from disaster, we must avoid this logical fallacy. Just because we are spared after we pray for rescue does not prove that any higher power intervened.

However, we can consider the weight of cumulative evidence. Recently, the adult study class in my congregation was pondering the question of divine intervention, and we were wrestling with this very issue—how is it possible to know in any given instance if a narrow escape was just luck, or if it represented some act of God or Providence? I asked the group to think back over their lives and try to recall how many times they were aware that they had been in situations where they could have been killed and (obviously) were not. All of us admitted with some embarrassment that we could remember quite a few. Then we pondered what the chances were that we had escaped so many times. It was like playing twenty rounds of Russian roulette with a single bullet in a six-chambered revolver. You'd have to expect that if it were simply statistical probabilities, you would have encountered the live chamber before twenty tries.

While it does not fit very neatly into my theology, I am driven to speculate that while I cannot prove in any single instance that God saved me from my deserved fate; Still the cumulative evidence would suggest that something more than random luck has been operating in my survival (or yours). This in no way suggests to me that I can count on this streak running on into the future, but neither can I easily dismiss the evidence of my history. Kirkegaard said, "Life can only be understood backwards; but it must be lived forward." When I look backward, I find it hard to ignore the probability that my survival is more than the result of random probabilities.

Is there anybody up there? I think so! Sometimes I am convinced that whoever is up there is even paying attention!

Collegially,  
*Frank*  
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To all of my East Central Region Friends: It is with a mixture of both excitement and sadness that I write to tell you that I have accepted a new position and will be leaving the East Central Region this summer.

I have accepted a new position at Rush-Presbyterian-St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago (now known as Rush University Medical Center) which will begin August 1. Rush is a place where I did two years of residency back in the 80's. I will be returning to work with JoAnn O'Reilly and George Fitchett, two major mentors of my CPE career. The Chicago area was home to me for 10-

## MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

At their Monroe motherhouse and in their eco-activism, IHM nuns praise the planet

By Richard Bak

Penguin houses are supposed to be cool. But the eco-friendly facility housing those erstwhile "penguins" of Catholic baby-boomer lore is way cool.

New-generation fluorescent lighting. Low-flow plumbing. Recycled flooring materials. It's enough to make a nun's rosary beads spin.

"It's just a marvelous restoration," says Sister Mary (Coronata) Laubacher, one of the 220 retired nuns living at the Immaculate Heart of Mary motherhouse in Monroe. The renovation of the elegant 1930s structure, which cost \$56 million and took nearly three years to complete, has drawn national attention as a model of "sustainability" – that is, a state-of-the-art "green" building that uses the least possible non-renewable resources.

A new three-acre wetlands area created in the back of the motherhouse was one novel approach employed to save resources. Planted with waterweed, wild celery, spike rush and marigold, it filters and cleanses thousands of gallons of scummy water from sinks and showers each day. This "graywater" is then brought back into the building to use for flushing toilets – a recycling process that produces a 40-percent savings in water volume.

"Historically, part of the IHM mission has always been to reach out to the abandoned," says **Sister Janet Ryan** of the IHM leadership council [CPE Supervisor]. "And the Earth is abandoned. The Earth does not have many advocates today." Sister Ryan is part of a committee organizing the River Raisin Institute, which is envisioned as a non-profit organization that would provide education, research and activism on such issues as global warming and water conservation. "It's all part and parcel of our mission," she says. "In the future, wars will be waged over water, not oil."

Environmental concerns were not originally part of the religious order's focus, says Sister Laubacher, who first came to Monroe as a 16-year old novice in 1934. "We have always lived very frugally. But now we recycle newspapers and plastic bottles. We preserve water. Cardboard – we used to just throw it out. Now we save it."

"They're the most energetic people I've ever met in terms of their attitude toward the environment," says Dr. Sally Welch, who heads the environmental science program at Marygrove College, which the IHMs founded in 1905. "It almost seems out of place for who they are."

The IHMs of today are not the IHMs of a century or even a generation ago. Superficially, at least, the sisters have undergone quiet a transformation since their heyday, when they were a staple at scores of area Roman Catholic schools. For hundreds of thousands of former students in the Detroit area, the popular image is of an imposing and slightly mysterious figure, dressed head to toe in flowing dark blue robes, demanding and excellence in the classroom that suggested IHM was an acronym for I Hate Mediocrity.

Much of that aura was stripped away in the social and religious upheavals of the 1960s, when many either left the order or ditched their habits for conventional clothes and reverted to their baptismal names. With their coiffed hair, sensible shoes and off-the-rack separates, the once-formidable nuns suddenly looked like everybody's Aunt Gertie. The closing of many Catholic schools and the ever-dwindling number of nuns (the order today is down to about 600 sisters, with only two or three women taking the vows each year) caused many IHMs to exchange the classroom for new social-work "missions" in the community, here and abroad.

As educators, IHMs remain in a class of their own. Ninety percent have advanced degrees and one in 10 has a doctorate. When coupled with their traditional social activism, these inquisitive, highly educated women – who enjoy being compared to their male counterparts, the Jesuits – can be a feisty bunch. Picketing, writing letters, holding seminars – they're all part of what the nuns call "eco-justice." During the debate over the Fermi nuclear

plant in Monroe, for instance, IHMs bought Edison stock so they could confront utility officials at stockholder meetings.

Still, education takes precedence over protest. When Marygrove established its environmental science program in 2000, it joined the University of Michigan-Dearborn as the only schools in the area offering a bachelor's degree in the discipline. "Other schools have environmental studies program," Welch says, "but ours is specifically focused on the science of preserving the environment."

A new biodiversity project has Marygrove students exploring the ecosystem of Sisters Island, an overgrown four-acre island on the River Raisin, which flows past the motherhouse. A century ago, nuns used to picnic there. "Nobody's been on the island – at least not legally – since 1964, which makes it ideal for a 'living laboratory,'" Welch says.

The only critters to be found on Sisters Island are muskrats, deer, snakes – and "a really cool spider," Welch says. The last, technically a spined micrathena spider, was an unexpected discovery, as the species is typically found only in Ohio and the South. Excitement creeps into Welch's voice when she talks about the creature, whose armor and camouflage make it the insect world's equivalent of a Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

"It looks like a little hermit crab, with a hard shell with little spikes coming out of it," she says. "It has a black body and a gray, white and black shell. It's no bigger than the tip of your pinky."

The average person may not share Welch's enthusiasm over creepy, crawly things. And "greenies" can sometimes be tiresome in their advocacy. But in the face of mounting evidence that the planet is headed for a variety of environmental disasters if eco-justice is continually denied over the coming decades, it's hard to argue with Sister Janet Ryan.

"The Earth," she says, "has rights too." □

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*Bak is a frequent contributor to Hour Detroit. E-mail: [editorial@hourdetroit.com](mailto:editorial@hourdetroit.com)*

# SUMMER CPE DAY

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2004

9:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.

BETHANY SEMINARY AND  
EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELGION  
RICHMOND, INDIANA

## SCHEDULE

9:00 Registration/fellowship (continental breakfast)

9:30 Welcome and Worship

10:00-1200 Plenary Presentation

Orin Newberry

ACPE Supervisor, PhD Candidate

"Ministry to Families"

12:00-1:00 Lunch (vegetarian options included)

1:00-2:15 Workshops

1. Group Dynamics- Cal Brand
2. Narrative Theology- John Peterson
3. Gestalt Group Work- Elizabeth Price
4. Ministry to Children- Judy Ragsdale
5. The Future in ACPE- Bill Scrivener

2:30-3:45

1. Narrative Theology-John Peterson
2. Gestalt Group Work- Elizabeth Price
3. Ministry to Children- Judy Ragsdale

SUMMER CPE DAY

REGISTRATION

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2004

BETHANY SEMINARY  
EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELIGION  
RICHMOND, INDIANA

CPE CENTER: \_\_\_\_\_

STUDENT NAMES:

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**PAYMENT (\$15 per person if postmarked before 6/25; \$20 after 6/25)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Check enclosed (check made payable to "ECR-ACPE")

\_\_\_\_\_ Payment will be made on July 9.

**SEND REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT TO:**

Rev. Michael Rice Saxton  
Center for Spiritual Care  
Saint Joseph Regional Medical Ctr.  
801 E. LaSalle Ave  
South Bend, IN 46614

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **July 2004 CPE Day** - Earlham School of Religion - Mike Saxton, Coordinator
- **September 24-25, 2004** - ECR Fall Conference, Hilton Suites, Lexington, KY.

### DEADLINE FOR THE JUNE 2004 NEWSLETTER

Information for the June newsletter must be received by May 26, 2004. Send to the Regional Business Office.

years and I am excited to be returning! At the same time, the ECR has been home to me for 14 years - I came to Indianapolis after making Associate, working at I.U. for 7 years and now at St. Vincent for 7 years. I will miss all of you - although I am hopeful that our paths will continue to cross - since the ACPE family is not THATbig!!!

I wanted you all to know and I wanted to say THANKS for all the ways you have been a part of my life! Blessings to you!!!!

*Mary Altenbaumer*

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### Certification Deadlines:

The next regional certification meeting is Thursday, September 23, 2004 in Lexington, KY. Applications are due (postmarked) by August 1, 2004. Materials will be due to committee members by August 23, 2004. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me by E-mail saxtonm@sjmc.com or by phone 574-282-8904 or E-mail mary.burks-pice@nortonhealthcare.org 502-629-3152.

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### Job Opportunities:

- The ECR is recruiting a **Regional Director** for a quarter time position (8-10 hours on average per week). The Director will serve as Pastor, Administrator, Communicator, Consultant and Mediator to its members. The Director will also represent the region at the national level. [Joan Lyke will continue to perform the secretarial bookkeeping duties]. The director shall be an ACPE supervisor and have knowledge of standards and organizational processes of ACPE history with the tradition of ACPE and the ECR. The position will begin October 1, 2004. Resumes must be postmarked NO LATER THAN JUNE 15, 2004. Resumes and/or questions for more information to: H. Joan Lyke, 7672 Cottonwood Lane, Dexter, MI. 48130. Telephone (800-336-5099). [hjoanlyke@yahoo.com](mailto:hjoanlyke@yahoo.com)
- The Cleveland Clinic Foundation has **five positions for the 2004-2005 Residency. The stipend is \$22,000-\$22,600. Apply to The Rev. Patrick M. Persaud, Pastoral Care, H19, The Cleveland Clinic Foundation, 9500 Euclid Avenue, Cleveland, OH. 44195. (216) 444-2518; FAX (216) 445-9678. Visit our Web site: <http://www.clevelandclinic.org/pastoralcare> for information on the Cleveland Clinic Foundation.**

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