



A monthly newsletter to report on developments of the Volunteer Ministries in Haiti, a program of the Xaverian Brothers supported by the Diocese of Richmond. Further information is available from the Haitian Ministry Commission, Diocese of Richmond, 7800 Carousel Lane, Richmond VA 23294 (telephone: 804-359-5661) (fax: 804-358-9159) (e-mail: pschwermer@richmonddiocese.org) (website: www.richmonddiocese.org/haiti/hat111.htm)

LETTER FROM BROTHER HARRY ECCLES

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2. A month ago today I was at the Bon Secours Center in Marriottsville, Maryland, participating in the orientation retreat with volunteers Katie Gordon and Peter Everest. Today Peter, a summer volunteer, went to PAP on his way to rejoin his family, and Katie is now watching a movie with the boys at Maison Fortuné Orphanage. When the three of us arrived on July 6, we found Ilsa Leon here, but (like Peter) hers was a short-term stay, and she has returned to the States to resume her medical studies. We also found Mike and Shelby McGeehin here to welcome us and to assist the new volunteers. Today Mike and Shelby are at the wedding of volunteer alum, Greg Mason, who is marrying Elizabeth Guerin, a former Louverture-Cleary volunteer. The Haiti Network!

COMINGS AND GOINGS are the norm here! When I returned, there was a German family of seven at the orphanage. More recently we've welcomed two orphanage board members, Chip Wirth and Chris Foley, and some of their family. Yesterday Bro. Mike McCarthy returned to the orphanage after a month in Pandiassou with two groups of five Scalabrini seminarians who came here daily to provide an enrichment program for the boys. (You'll hear more about that. For now, let me simply say that it was a very enriching experience just to observe the program.) Cheryl Riordan from St. Nicholas parish, Virginia Beach also stopped in to say hello. Leo Blumle, the container expediter, was with us

briefly, too. If I've forgotten anyone, it is because the volume of activity was too much for me!

TAKING IT ALL IN might have been easier if I hadn't been busy processing a long and active visit in the States. Family, fellow Xaverians, and other friends kept me on the move, and, in spite losing my duffel bag for two days, I developed an appreciation of Greyhound service from Boston to Norfolk. Many friends were generous and patient in meeting me and dropping me off. I couldn't get by without them. God bless them--and all of you!

WHEN WE REACHED Port-au-Prince, I was heavier than I've ever been, and I carried more loot than ever, too--three duffel bags full of seeds, meds, books, M & Ms, clothing, plastic ware for our kitchen, popping corn, and more. I did some of the shopping and scrounging, but I had a dedicated support team.

SINCE MY RETURN, I've spent a weekend at the Sant Zaveryen. Some of the young men were still taking exams, some were working on summer projects, and some were with their families. September is the "usual" vacation month for college students.

HERE ON THE PLATEAU CENTRAL July and August are typical vacation months, and I'm already getting requests from students for registration fees, uniforms, along with tuition and books. Grade school and high school are not as costly as the university and professional schools, but for the poor it's not easy. The state is far from being able to provide

universal education.

SO, WHAT ABOUT THE FOOD PROBLEM? That problem is still with us, but then it always is. I don't want to seem to make light of it, but in my view it's constant malnutrition that plagues most people here, and most take it as a way of life. Shorter lives, lives more prone to sickness. The crisis is real, but not as dramatic as the media reports. That's my view. The problem is not so much the shortage of food but its rising cost, but this concern has less impact on the perpetually hungry poor. (The cost of food is affected by the price of gas, now about \$7 a gallon.)

A BOOK WORTH LOOKING FOR: *What's the What*, by David Eggers. It's the story of one of Sudan's "lost boys." An important book, in my book!

I'M NOW BEGINNING my twentieth year in Haiti, a little slower than I used to be, but blessed this year with the presence of Bro. Mike McCarthy and volunteer Katie Gordon. Please pray for us and for the people whose lives we share.

br_heccles@yahoo.com, or c/o Lynx Air International, P.O. Box 407139, Ft. Lauderdale FL 33340

VOLUNTEER NEWS

As Br. Harry mentioned, this month several former Xaverian Volunteers in Haiti took part in the celebration of the wedding of Greg and Elizabeth Mason. Both are Penn State grads who served a year in Haiti, Greg in Pandiassou and Elizabeth at the Louverture-Cleary School in Croix-des-Bouquets.

They live in New York City where Greg is on the staff of Hunter College, and Elizabeth, a social worker, teaches at a Brooklyn inner-city school

One unique feature of their wedding was that they asked that instead of giving gifts to them, contributions be made to Maison Fortuné and/or Louverture-Cleary.

Former volunteers Jonathan Dohanich and Mike McGeehin, both also now married, as well as Br. Cosmas Rubencamp, CFX, attended the wedding.

Jonathan and his wife Leanna, both veterinarians and living in Rappahannock Co. Virginia, are expecting a son in early September—the earlier the better, according to Leanna!



Greg and Elizabeth Mason, Michael McGeehin, and Jonathan Dohanich