



# The Guardian

*St. Michael Parish Newsletter*

Fall 2007

*Extending a Warm Welcome to All*

North Andover, MA 01845

## New Seton Center planning is under way

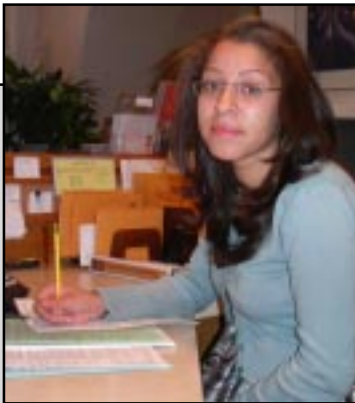
Last spring, *The Guardian* reported that plans were being formulated to demolish the former convent that serves as a Youth Ministry Center and replace it with a new parish life center, to be called the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Center.

We are happy to report that those plans are now beginning to take shape. Under the direction of Don Marinelli, a building committee was formed and Architectural Design Concepts (ADC) of North

Andover was commissioned to develop a design for the Seton Center. ADC recently presented several design concepts to the building committee.

As one of the criteria for the new center, the building committee has asked that it be connected to the Pastoral Center so that parish activities can more easily ebb and flow between the two structures. Current designs show that there will be a single,

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The parish's outreach program is supporting a young student's goal of becoming an attorney.

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### **Mmmm...Mmmm...Good!**

Neave Sullivan and her family were among 100 people to attend this year's St. Vincent de Paul fundraising luau at the Parish Hall in August. Besides delicious treats, the event featured music, dancing and raffles.



*Photo by Jim Fernandez*

## Scholarly Studies Completed

This group of faculty advisors at St. Michael School helped create the standards that students must meet to become members of a national honor society. They are (from left): Kate Grant, Betty Gill, Deb Adam, Carol McCarthy, Shirley Coutu and Christine Nagle.

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*Photo by Sue Rogge*

## Camaraderie abounds on parish trip to Ireland

By Larry Curran

Saint Augustine once wrote, “The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page.” If so, it’s arguable that 44 parishioners that traveled to Ireland in October have read an entire chapter, or two.

The trip was organized by Fr. John Delaney and parishioner Betty Fountain to create a greater sense of community among parishioners. “We’re a large parish, and trips such as these can help us to get to know one another better and have lots of fun in the process,” Fr. John says.

In recent years, the parish has sponsored fall foliage bus rides and excursions to nearby theatre productions and concerts, but the trip to Ireland marked the first group journey to a relatively distant locale. The Emerald Isle was selected for a number of reasons, Fr. John says. “It’s a beautiful country with wonderful people. Plus, I have visited Ireland on four previous occasions, and I have some familiarity as to the places we could visit.”

Among the sights the group took in were the Cliffs of Moher, which span nearly five miles over the Atlantic Ocean on the western shores of County Clare, and Our Lady of Knock Shrine, located in County Mayo on the west coast of Ireland and renowned for a miraculous apparition that occurred there in 1879. While at the shrine, Fr. John celebrated one of two Masses — the other being celebrated on a Sunday in Dublin. Other stops on the trip included: Waterford, Wicklow, Killarney, the Ring of Kerry and the Dingle Peninsula.

Overall, Fr. John said the trip was marked

by “friendship and togetherness” and that everyone came away from the visit with enthusiastic feelings about “the Irish culture, the history, the people and the landscape.”

Based on the positive experiences expressed by the parishioners who made the trip, Fr. John says other tours are now being planned for Italy and for Oberammergau in Germany. ♦

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## New Seton Center to help accommodate growing ministries

*Continued from page 1*

large gathering area, along with 20 multi-purpose meeting rooms. The meeting rooms would be used by students participating in the Religious Education Program, as well as by the 60 ministries that currently serve our parish and community. A new kitchen would be built in the new center to service activities in the parish hall and new center.

As the structure takes form and cost estimates are determined, the pastoral team will be inviting parishioners to forums to learn more about the Seton Center’s design and function. Meanwhile, a fundraising team will be established under the direction of parishioner Rick Blain, who led the parish’s last expansion campaign.

The pastoral team of Fr. John Delaney, Fr. Paul Keyes and Fr. Jerry Hogan is supporting the new project as a means of helping the parish’s many growing ministries. ♦

*The Guardian* is published for parishioners of St. Michael Parish, 196 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845

**Publisher:** Rev. John Delaney  
**Editorial Advisor:** Mary Alice Rock  
**Editor:** Ken Tokarz



**Writers:** Larry Curran, Jane C. Demers, Anne Marie Guggenberger  
**Photographers:** Julie Bloise, Jim Fernandez

Comments about content or suggestions for articles are welcome. Parishioners interested in reporting, editing, photography, or proofreading are invited to join the staff. Call 978-686-4050 to leave a message, or send an e-mail to: [the\\_guardian@saintmichael.com](mailto:the_guardian@saintmichael.com).

Past issues of *The Guardian* can be found at:  
<http://www.saint-michael.org/guardian.htm>



The Pre-Cana Ministry Team helps prepare engaged couples for marriage. Pictured (from left) are: Dave Kazmer, Nancy Kazmer, Dave Horne, Christy Horne, Rob Moore, Stacey Moore, Cheri Grassi, Mike Grassi, Lisa McCabe and Todd McCabe.

*Photo by Anne Marie Guggenberger*

## Pre-Cana ministry informs, inspires engaged couples

*By Anne Marie Guggenberger*

If you were married in a Catholic church, you'll most likely recall participating in a Pre-Cana program as part of your wedding preparations. And, if you were anything like parishioner Cheri Grassi, there were probably some anxious moments leading up to your first Pre-Cana session.

"I feared going to Pre-Cana, but just like everything else at St. Michael's, it was so fun, and the people were very welcoming," Cheri says. "It was a warm and inviting environment to talk about the things that matter most in a marriage." Such moments of anxious anticipation are not unusual among engaged couples, says Cheri who, with her husband Mike, became involved in the Pre-Cana ministry at St. Michael shortly after their marriage in 2001. They now serve as the program's coordinators.

Couples often arrive for the first Pre-Cana session appearing guarded but they quickly learn to relax, Cheri says. And, ultimately, they invariably express gratitude

for hearing shared stories and for having the opportunity to discuss a number of challenging topics, such as marriage as a Sacrament, personal finances, open and two-way communications and family planning.

The Pre-Cana program at St. Michael spans two weeknights and includes one Saturday afternoon. It concludes with a Mass. The sessions are facilitated by married couples and parish priests, all of whom share personal stories and experiences that both inform and inspire. On average, 15 to 20 engaged couples participate in each Pre-Cana program.

All sessions begin with prayer and a renewal of vows between the married couples in attendance. There are Gospel readings and homilies. And topics of discussion are sometimes presented through skits. At times, couples may complete a discussion topic by themselves prior to everyone sharing outcomes of those individual talks.

Participating in a Pre-Cana program is required by the Archdiocese, but couples

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**S**t. Michael began sponsoring an annual Parish Picnic in 2001. Traditionally held at the town common, the festivities were cancelled last year due to construction activities at that town site. This year, in order to avoid another cancellation, the picnic was held on the church and school grounds on Main Street. Here are moments from the 2007 picnic, captured by photographer Jim Fernandez.



## New mini-courses developed for Confirmation students

By Larry Curran

More than 200 tenth-grade students are scheduled to receive the sacrament of Confirmation in the spring, following slight changes in curriculum that were made because of the large number of candidates and the anticipated loss of classrooms next year when construction begins on the new parish life center.

Mary Alice Rock, director of Faith Formation, says the sacrament of Confirmation examines how the Holy Spirit works in our lives and encourages active participation in the life of the Church.

As part of the revised program this year, Mary Alice says all Confirmation studies have been divided into three mini-courses. Already in place for ninth graders were two mini-courses: The "Creed," examining what we believe as Catholics, and "Service," which calls for living out Christ's mission in our communities. This year, a new mini-course on "Prayer" has been added to help students grow in their relationship with God.

All youth preparing for Confirmation meet as a large group following the 6 p.m. Mass on Sundays. During those Sunday evening gatherings, students reflect on how they have experienced God's presence in their lives during the preceding week. In addition, they



Enjoying ice cream during a welcome social are first-year Confirmation students (from left) Siobhan Murphy, Morgan Hancock and Allison Kramer.

Photo by Julie Bloise

participate in 30-minute prayer sessions in the main church, as well as the day chapel. The prayer sessions are intended to teach the Confirmation candidates "the rich and varied forms of prayer in our Catholic tradition, such as adoration, art, the liturgy of the hours, music and scripture," says Mary Alice.

Tenth graders, meanwhile, will also participate in a weekend retreat in addition to the three mini-courses. And all students will also take a new mini-course on "Sacraments," which was developed to help them discover the connection among the three Sacraments of Initiation — Baptism, Eucharist and Confirmation.

As part of their studies, the students also attend Baptism preparation sessions for parents and sponsors of children about to be baptized. They also serve as volunteers during Baptisms.

Besides Mary Alice, the Confirmation team includes Deacon Joe Arsenault, Youth Minister Rick Chasse and Youth Ministry Assistants Pam McKallagat and Holly Bernard.♦



Jim Quinlan and his son, Jim A. Quinlan, play "Confirmation Bingo" with Amber Proudly and her mom, Diane Proudly. Jim and Amber are in their first year of Confirmation classes.

Photo by Julie Bloise

## How Rick Chasse found his calling as a youth minister

By Jane C. Demers

**R**ick Chasse, the new youth minister at St. Michael, has held, by his own estimate, about 25 different jobs, ranging from banker to pizza maker to car rental associate. But it wasn't until an insightful nun took him aside at a retreat one day and told him, "I see gifts in you" that he finally found his true calling, youth ministry. The nun, always on the lookout for charismatic people of faith, asked him to help her conduct a Confirmation retreat. She saw what he didn't see in himself, a "phenomenal ability to engage young people."

Growing up in Lynn in a family of five brothers and one sister, Rick says there were two constants in his life: dinner at 5:30 and church on Sunday. His mother worked daytime hours for 30 years cooking and cleaning at St. Pius rectory in Lynn before heading off to care for people who needed assistance through the night. Her love for the Church is evident in Rick's name: Richard James Chasse, named after his mother's beloved Archbishop Richard James Cardinal Cushing, then cardinal of Boston. His name led Rick to believe his path to the Church and his reliance on his Catholic faith were preordained.

His grandmother's home was his refuge from the noisy house of his youth. He visited her daily, did his homework there and took her to church on a regular basis. "She was my best friend," he says. Attending Catholic school through eighth grade, Rick went to public high school, Lynn English, and then to Salem State, leaving before graduation to take a full-time position at a local bank, beginning his odyssey of working multiple jobs over the next decade.

The call to the Church remained constant, if distant, during this time. While living in Florida for a year, Rick helped a friend move into his dorm at St. Leo University. It was there he spotted a large cross on a nearby hill as he took a break from moving

boxes. It drew him in so powerfully that he called his mother to talk about what it meant and what path he should take in his life. Exploring the priesthood became more than a passing thought. But after spending time at St. John's Seminary, he left, only to be called back to the Church in a different role

*Chasse made a connection with a group of sullen and sarcastic boys that ultimately instilled them with excitement and interest in their faith.*



five years later. That's when a then 29-year-old Chasse decided to attend a church retreat called "To Encounter Christ" and where the insightful nun took him aside.

Asked by the nun to prepare a 15-minute talk with no mention of God for the Confirmation retreat, Chasse decided to discuss his lack of basketball skills. The talk resonated with his audience of sullen and sarcastic young boys because they later sought Chasse out to learn in more detail just how badly he played basketball. By the end of the weekend, he had made such a connection with the boys that their parents later called the parish asking what had transpired to instill their sons with such excitement and interest in their faith. Chasse recognized he had found his calling. He enrolled in a two-year national Youth Ministry certification program for middle school- and high school-aged children. It was, he says, "the best thing I ever did." His first foray into youth ministry was at St. Richard's Church in Danvers, under the tutelage of Scott Morin, the husband of Rick's predecessor at St. Michael, Margo Morin. It was where he also met Father Paul Keyes for the first time.

Chasse believes that the church is part of

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## Honor Society chapter established at St. Michael School

A chapter of the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) has been established at Saint Michael School. Students admitted into the NJHS are judged not only on their scholarship but on their individual leadership, service, character and citizenship attributes. The local chapter will be officially known as the Saint Michael School Chapter of the National Junior Honor Society.

Over the past few years, six Saint Michael School faculty members developed five nationally approved parameters students must meet to gain admittance into the society. With respect to the criteria for scholarship, for example, the NJHA requires its members have at minimum grade point average of 85 percent, or



B, or 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).

A Saint Michael School selection committee is scheduled to announce the chapter's first student members during the current school year. Once selected, a candle-lighting ceremony will be held as part of the induction ceremonies.

The National Honor Society, which has chapters at middle schools and high schools throughout the U.S. and Canada, literally counts hundreds of notable scholars, politicians, athletes, entertainers, physicians and business owners among its alumni.

Among them are: Bill Bradley (senator), Alan Alda (actor), Van Cliburn (pianist), Dr. John

Cletcher (president of the Assn. of Orthopedic Surgeons), Sheryl Crow (musician), Jim Davis (cartoonist), Steve Grogan (former quarterback-Patriots), and Lee Iacocca (former president of Chrysler Corp.). ♦

## Christ-Seekers sponsors welcome social

Anyone interested in exploring the Catholic faith is welcome to visit with the Christ-Seekers, who meet Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m., at the Pastoral Center.

Dale Peng (right), a junior at Merrimack College, was among those attending an informational meeting about Christ-Seekers, as were (far right) Rosemary and Amir Ghali.

*Photos by Julie Bloise*



*Looking forward, giving back***Future attorney joins parish staff***By Ken Tokarz*

**W**ith financial support from St. Michael parishioners, Yashana Rivera is on her way to realizing her career goal to become an attorney. A freshman at Notre Dame High School in Lawrence, Yashana performs administrative tasks one day a week at the parish offices, and her “salary” is sent to the school as part of her tuition.

Notre Dame High School is part of the Cristo Rey Network of college-preparatory high schools that are located throughout the U.S. and attract students from disadvantaged backgrounds. This network of schools, whose name translates to “Christ the King” in Spanish, features a Corporate Internship Program (CIP) as part of the curriculum. The CIP requires students to work entry-level jobs one day a week throughout the school year to help defray the cost of their educations; as a result, students have extended school days and school years.

Yashana said she was attracted to Notre Dame High School after hearing about the curriculum from friends of her mother, Carmen, and her dad, Adrian. “I like it because in addition to the courses that prepare me for college, I can get some good work experience.”

Although the Cristo Rey Network of high schools provides a faith-based Catholic education, each is called upon to promote an environment that respects religious and cultural differences and encourages inter-religious and multi-cultural dialogue.

Notre Dame High School is operated in partnership with the Archdiocese of Boston and is governed by a board of directors. Fr. John Delaney of St. Michael Parish is one of the school’s directors. As a CIP sponsor, Fr. John says the parish donates \$5,600 toward Yashana’s education. “Our participation is

part of the parish’s outreach program to be a good and helpful neighbor. And reaching out to help the bright and wonderful students who attend Notre Dame High School is one way we’re attempting to fulfill that mission.”

Fr. John notes that the school serves



As part of a work-study program, Yashana Rivera helps support the staff at St. Michael Parish.

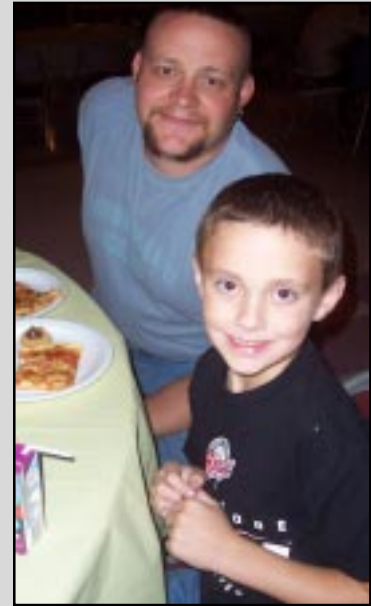
*Photo by Ken Tokarz*

students from the greater Lawrence area and that their CIP jobs are located with enterprises as far away as Woburn to the south and Manchester, N.H., to the north.

Notre Dame High School, which opened in 2004, is scheduled to graduate its first class in 2008. ♦

**Want sponsorship information?**

Any business interested in participating in Notre Dame’s CIP may contact its director, Jay Robie, at (978) 689-8222, ext. 11; or by emailing him at [jrobie@ndhslaw.org](mailto:jrobie@ndhslaw.org). ♦



## It's Pizza Party Time!

Following a Mass of Dedication to honor the role that parents play in the faith formation of their children, a pizza party was held for families in the Pastoral Center. The three "best friends" pictured above are (from left): Claire Davidson, Lindsay Albert and Madison Fredo. At right are Cody Summers and his dad Jim.

*Photos by Julie Bloise*

## Rick Chasse finds his calling as a youth minister

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a greater community and that a youth minister needs to be visible beyond the confines of the church. But wherever you find him, Chasse says his ministry will revolve around providing spiritual, social and service-minded activities in a manner that's as much fun as possible. As for that approach, there's at least one insightful nun who would be in total agreement. ♦

### Youth Minister Outlines Future Plans

**I**n addition to running the Confirmation program at St. Michael, Youth Minister Rick Chasse plans to modify and continue holding the Tuesday night teen group "Something More." He would like the group to meet once a month and limit the group to those who already have been confirmed, which would mean 11th and 12th graders. He would also like to open the group up to local college freshmen and sophomores.

Chasse also plans to establish a youth council for grades 9-12 that would gather once a month for prayer and the planning of social events and service projects. He said he would like the Youth Council to work on ideas to include more of the parish youth and talent, especially musical talent, in the Sunday 6 p.m. youth Mass. He wants to form a peer leadership group of 11th and 12th graders who have been confirmed. This group would work the confirmation retreats and help with middle school programming and chaperoning middle school events. He said he plans to provide peer leadership training and wants the program to be inclusive of as many teens as possible: "We'll take them all!" He also collaborates with Kim Silk, director of middle school programming. Recently, for example, middle and high school students combined their talents to create a "Haunted Convent" and raise funds for the Cor Unum Meal Center in Lawrence. ♦

## 'All Aboard' The Polar Express

Youngsters and their parents can kick off their holiday season on Saturday, November 24, by taking a "magical ride to the North Pole" by way of the Polar Express. Along for the ride will be Santa's elves who, along with everyone else, will be entertained by a special reading of Chris Van Allsburg's *The Polar Express*.

The train ride will feature hot cocoa and dessert, and a visit is expected from some special Christmas friends. Tickets are \$18 per person and proceeds will benefit St. Michael School. One dollar from each ticket sold will be donated to the Lazarus House, a ministry for the poor and homeless of the Merrimack Valley.

So get on board! Trains depart from the Bradford MBTA station at 12:30, 2:35, 4:35 and 7:10 p.m. Tickets may be purchased at St. Michael School during school hours, or by visiting [www.saintmichael.com](http://www.saintmichael.com). For more information, call the school at (978) 626-1862.♦



**A delicious cookie...a good story...  
a wonderful train ride...are  
a good formula for creating  
very happy youngsters!**

## Pre-Cana ministry informs, inspires

*Continued from page 3*

have the option of choosing where they fulfill the obligation. Pre-Cana is offered each October and March at St. Michael Parish. To learn more about the Pre-Cana Ministry, contact Cheri Grassi at (978) 686-4050 or via email at [smile938@yahoo.com](mailto:smile938@yahoo.com).♦

### The derivation of the name 'Pre-Cana'

The name Pre-Cana is derived from the Gospel of John (2:1-12), which discusses the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee at which Jesus, upon his mother's request, performed the miracle of changing water into wine. Through His presence at Cana, Jesus sanctified marriage. Pre-Cana programs recall this Gospel and act as a reminder that Christ is forever present in every marriage.♦

## Looking Back

## Former pastor recalled as 'quintessential Irish priest'

By Larry Curran

"He was the quintessential Irish priest." That's how Jack McManus recalls Monsignor William Long, pastor of St. Michael Parish for nearly two decades (1956-74). Jack describes the late Msgr. Long as being very approachable, friendly and even-keeled, and blessed with an excellent memory.



Msgr. Long

Jack owns McManus Consulting in North Andover, which specializes in consulting to banks. He graduated from North Andover High School in 1976 and has been a member of the parish all his life, as was his father. Jack is co-chairman of the Parish Finance Committee and a member of the Pastoral Council.

"Msgr. Long was a fixture in the parish as I grew up. I was here for the whole time Msgr. Long was." Jack recalls that when he and his wife, Marsha, became engaged, she asked Jack to come with her to have the engagement ring blessed. Then 22, Jack was greeted by Msgr. Long this way: "How are you doing Mac? Do you still live on Peters Street?" Msgr. Long seemed to know everyone as if they lived right next door to him.

Many years later, Jack and Marsha happened to attend a Mass at St. Pius X Parish in Milton, where Msgr. Long was assigned after he left St. Michael. As the McManus' entered, they were both greeted by Msgr. Long as if it were that same day they had their engagement ring blessed. And they were given another warm greeting as they left Mass that day. "I've heard stories from others as well about his excellent memory," Jack says.

By way of explanation, Jack adds: "He had a charisma much like that of Fr. Keyes. People trusted and looked up to him."

Fr. Keyes also has fond recollections about Msgr. Long. Upon becoming a priest, Fr. Keyes' first assignment was to St. Robert Bellarmine Parish in West Andover. Among

Fr. Keyes' very first visitors were Msgr. Long and Fr. Tom Walsh, both of whom were assigned to St. Michael. They came to welcome Fr. Keyes to the area.

As far as Fr. Keyes is concerned, Msgr. Long had a photographic memory. "He never forgot when he saw you come up the front stairs of the church [the first time]. He even remembered the names of your children. He was very gifted that way, and I thought he was a very prayerful priest."

Maryann Marinelli, who coordinates the Confirmation Program at St. Michael, also has fond memories of Msgr. Long that date back to 1962, when she and husband, Don, joined St. Michael Parish. "He was just unbelievable. He was friendly and knew everyone's name. But it seems that history repeats itself because we have those same attributes now in Fr. Keyes."

Maryann recalls that back in the 1960s, the practice for Confirmation was to have just one person act as the sponsor for all the male candidates, and another for all the female candidates. "Monsignor Long called me 'Mary Sunshine.' He called and asked me if I had an Easter bonnet because I was to be the sponsor for the girls."

Jim Cassidy, a longtime member of St. Michael, and an usher at the 10:30 a.m. Sunday Mass, adds: "Msgr. Long was so friendly with the kids and the kids loved him too."♦

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**Editor's note:** Following a lengthy illness, Msgr. Long died at the age of 91 on June 17, 1992, at the St. Joseph Manor Nursing Home in Dorchester, according to a report in *The Pilot* newspaper. He was buried in Mount Hope Cemetery in Roslindale. While pastor of St. Michael, Msgr. Long was elevated to the rank of Domestic Prelate and, as such, became an honorary member of the papal household. Fr. Long retired to his sister's home in Lexington in 1973, where he resided for 12 years until moving to Regina Cleri, a home for retired priests maintained by the Archdiocese of Boston.♦



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## A REALLY GOOD SPORT!



Ball throwers at this year's annual Parish Picnic had the potential to drench sitting volunteers with water balloons if their aim was accurate. Among those taking a turn on the "wet seat" was Fr. John Delaney. Related photos, pg. 4.

*Photos by Ken Tokarz*