

Sarnelli House

NEWSLETTER

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November 2018

A BLESSED AND MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL FROM US ALL!!

The year 2018 (Chinese Year of the Dog) proved a tad difficult; for both children and staff. First of all, the Royal Thai Highway department built a 4 lane highway going into Viengkhuak. They dumped fill to make two new lanes. The fill on the south side (adjacent to the Junior high Our Lady of Refuge house) succeeded in filling in the canal that sent monsoon rain water into the Mekong River. We were renting that land yearly from the owner: the diocese of Udorn. The diocese planned to sell the land and buildings, if and when we moved out. Generous donors proceeded to send money to build a new home for the 23 Junior High girls. Construction began in February. Then I complicated things on March 2, when I woke up to get ready for the Saturday Children's Mass. I thought my right foot was asleep until I realized my right arm and hand were next to useless. My speech was slurred. Once the staff and Nurse Kate established the fact that I was not hammered, they threw me into a van and I went to Udorn; to the Aekudon hospital. They did tests, and diagnosed a brain bleed, which caused a stroke. I spent a week in

the hospital. Cousins from home, Mike and Janet O'Connor, were there with ladies from the staff. My sister Brigid was up from Canberra, Australia, after she heard the news. (She had bought me a ticket to visit her and her husband Steve, but I had stroked out before the trip). When I got home, I had lost 14 kilo (30 pounds) of weight. I was lucky that Ben and Angelique Ummels were here volunteering. Ben is an Assistant Physical Therapist from Maastricht,





Holland. They worked with me and pushed me to the point I could walk well and do most things I was capable of before.

I went to the U.S. June 20 for a super Barn Mass (the last one) and a successful Ceboride. My brother Kevin and sister Brigid insisted on an 80th birthday party for me. I was afraid we would be the only ones to show up, but almost 280 guests showed, and it was a great time.

I returned to Thailand August 22 to find the girls in their new house at Donwai, at the height of the monsoon season, surrounded by a sea of mud. By then, I had money to build a nice wall protecting them. I also sent workers to Viengkhuak to tear down the pavilion and rebuild it at our 12 rai site, beside the fish pond (I had bought and built it in 2005 from money donated at my dad's funeral).

Fr. Ole has been coming up from Bangkok to help with many tasks, now especially as we try to become a Thai Foundation, so as to hopefully get financial help from Thai companies, since the government does not help. Our Aussie nurse Kate wears many hats: nurse, director of volunteers and in charge of Charlene House. Her husband Brian is a great fundraiser and both Brian and Kate also teach English at the Redemptorist School for the Disabled in Nongkhai. Brother Keng works with our college kids and other kids studying away. We now have 24 kids in college. Brother Keng and Kate also run our Outreach Program. Mrs. Kung is head honcho of all the houses run by housemothers, save for the Gary and Janet Smith House for boys, which is run by Mr. Jay, a young lad who just finished University.

We have two young ladies who are very ill; one has multi resistant TB in the lungs and lymph glands, and one has a fungal infection causing meningitis and it has entered her bone marrow as well. We ask your prayers for all of our sick and hurt children, young people and adults and the staff who take care of them. I hope you all have a happy, holy Christmas season and all God's blessings in the New Year. We pray for you all, every evening at night prayer, in all the houses.

Father Mike C.Ss.R