

News from Bro. Jim

January '04

# Senta Bilong Helpim

A PROJECT OF THE PASSIONIST COMMUNITY

P.O. BOX 248 VANIMO SANDAUN PROVINCE PAPUA NEW GUINEA

People who are regular readers of this newsletter will be thinking that I have some stock phrases in my computer that I simply copy and paste. That is not the case. Each word comes from the tips of my fingers (2 of them) and from the bottom of my heart. The fact is that there are just so many people who are always helping and giving to the children at the Senta, that I always seem to be saying thank you.

### Thank you, Holy Cross!

This time is no exception and I have to start by first of all thanking Dennis and Mary Cogle, Marie Butler and Fr. Tier-nan Doherty for arranging and hosting what was really a very successful and entertaining night at Holy Cross. I know that there was a huge amount of planning and work that went into the night and it is wonderful that so many turned up to support the function but at the same time had such a good evening. Thank you one and all.



*A good place to have lunch after a hard, hot day of construction work!*

### Passionist visitors

We have had a lot of visitors since the last letter, they were all Passionists from different parts of the world who had come to PNG for a conference. All of them are very impressed with the work that is being done at the Senta but none more so than our Superior General, Fr Ottaviano D'tigiano. I am very excited after his visit as he is going to see if he

can get a group of the Passionist Sisters to come and work at the Senta.

If we could get the sisters it would make a huge difference in the lives of the severely disabled and their families as, with the new hostel, we would be able to take the children and care for them at the Senta for respite periods for the families. This is a very real need. Just recently a mother came to me pleading for help. She said that she had been looking after her severely disabled daughter for 30 years and she was feeling tired. She said that she would just like some time that she could do the things that other women in the village do. She is tied down 24 hours a day with her mentally retarded daughter who can never be left alone. We, at the Senta, are all hoping that there are Sisters who will take up the challenge.



### The progress of our "Apple"

Appolonia is back with *Apple walking....* us again after completing the first stage of her rehabilitation at Raihu hospital in Aitape. She is just so happy to be back as we are to have her back.

Apple is making great progress and I must thank Erika, the physiotherapist at Aitape, for getting Apple away to a good start. She still has a long way to go but Apple herself is very patient and is happy to work away at her exercises knowing that is the only way for her to progress. Chris Blackburn will guide us through the next stages of rehab. by email.

### Container news

I was informed by an email from Anthony Cheevers today that the container had

*(Continued on page 2)*

(Continued from page 1)

been repacked and was all ready to go. This is indeed good news for us at the



*The beginning of the first day of construction of the new Senta hostel.*

Senta but no doubt it is just as pleasing for Anthony as it has been an enormous task for he and his wife Joan and for the helpers he was able to get. To all those involved, our heartfelt thanks. There are a lot of things in the container that we will be able to use at the Senta, the rest of it is all for resale and will help enormously towards the funding of the hostel that we are in the process of building.

## Hostel construction

It is quite some time since I have been involved with a building project and any real physical work, needless to say after the first couple of days, I did not think I was going to make it. The weather seemed unbelievably hot. It was so hot that every couple of hours I would have to go and jump into the pool to cool off. I even had my lunch sitting in the pool. The foundations had to be dug through rock, my hands blistered, I was sun burnt and tired but with the help of 2 or 3 of the volunteers, we persevered and got the hard part finished. Now it is just a matter of making frames and standing them up. We put up a lean too which will act as a carport when the building is finished but now it is a nice shady place to prepare all the



*At the end of the day....*



*...and at the end of week one.*

frames. This week we had a couple of days off from the building so as we could work on some orders for furniture so as to keep our customers happy as well as keep the show on the road.

## Jim on his bike!

Speaking of the road, I am back on it again. I have given up the walking as I was losing an hour a day which could have been spent more productively, now I ride a bike too and from the Senta each day. It was a bit of a struggle for a time. The first couple of days my legs were like junket when I got off the bike, after that they were like jelly. But I am happy to say that I can now get off at the end of the journey and



*Nowadays, Jim rides a bicycle to the Senta!*

walk away from the bike without support. I do enjoy the ride and it is helping to keep me fit and keeping the weight under control.

## Ordination of Jacob

A big event for the Passionist Community last weekend was the ordination of Fr. Jacob Kuman. The ordination was in Moresby and so not all of us could get

there but we are looking forward to a visit from Fr Jacob in the near future. We now have 2 local priests and 2 professed brothers. There are more in formation and so hopefully they will see the journey through.

## New volunteers

We have been fortunate to have 3 new volunteers start at the Senta which is very handy as our patient numbers are also on the increase and they will be increasing even more as Harry has already started work on 3 more at the local hospital. As soon as they are discharged, they will attend the Senta.

## Eucharist celebrations

Last Sunday was a very emotional and a very proud day for me. Fifty children made their first Holy Communion and among them were 2 children that we had sent to Australia years ago for life saving surgery. Without that surgery neither of them would have made it to this day and there were none more happy than the families of the two, Darren and Sharon, the Soni family and the Akela family. Both children are now like any other youngsters growing up, they are full of energy, are extremely happy and both are doing very well at school. To see them makes all the hardships seem worthwhile and there are many people who have helped in making their story a successful story.

Another proud time recently was when 2 of our volunteers got their driving li-



*Acobi Pano: now the proud owner of a Papua New Guinea driver's license.*

cense and one of them was Acobi. Acobi has been working at getting his

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Meet the Children

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Hello, my name is Sheila Kumusi. I am 13 years old and I am living with my parents at Dasi, not far from town.

I come to the Senta from Monday to Friday for my physical exercises. It is very interesting to be here at the Senta for a disabled kid like me because there are many children with all kind of disabilities and we learn many new things such as bilum making, cooking, fishing and some art work. At home some of these activities are for big people but they won't bother to teach us.



My favorite pets are cats and I have a female cat at home. Her name is Kate. Sometimes when I come home from the Senta, I go looking for her and make sure she is fine.

Lastly I would like to say hello to Claire who we all miss very much. She is the new editor for SBH newsletter.

I wish every one all the very best and God bless you all.

Love from *Sheila*

## Meet the Grandmothers

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Hi! My name is Patricia Wunum and I am from Oro Province Popondetta. I am married to Ignas Wunum who is from Nuke in the Sandaun Province. We have 7 children, 3 girls and 4 boys. Two boys and two girls are married and they all have kids.

Ignas and I have 10 grandchildren so far and they all live with us and are in good health..

That is the story of our family and now I would like to add a bit more and tell you of my work at the Senta Bilong Helpim, here in Waromo.

I was very impressed when I came to the Senta for the very first time. What brought me here was my grand child Mary Collin. Mary Collin is going on to 2 years old and she cannot walk or even stand up. I asked her parents if I could bring her to the Senta and so they agreed and so she is now at the Senta in the hands of all the volunteers who are so helpful.

I would like to add more about the Senta. I am proud to say that we have a home where there is care for those who cannot afford to get what they really want or need in their lives. I just don't know what to say about this Senta, I am lost for words. I hope the people living around or in Sandaun Province have seen or heard of this Senta which is doing so much to help the needy ones.

As I said, I am lost for words. Bro. James asked me to write a few lines asking me to explain why I wanted to become a volunteer. I must truly say, when I first entered this room and saw all the lovable disabled children, I was in tears. The love and care that a mother would give her child, was right here. I decided then to become a volunteer and also give motherly love and care to these children.

To end my words of thanks to all these helpful, hard working, smiling, laughing, generous and caring volunteers, please keep up the good work. Thanks also must go to Bro. James, Harry and Florence for all their hard work in keeping the Senta going.

To end on a happy note I must tell you that after a couple of months at the Senta, Mary Collin can now stand and walk. Her parents are overjoyed.

May God bless you all who support the work of the Senta.

*Patricia Wunum.*



## Meet the Volunteers

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Hello everyone, my name is Delphine Panii (Della) and I come from Waromo Village, which is a small village on the West Coast of Vanimo Town in Sandaun Province. I was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> September in the year 1982.

I have worked as a volunteer for almost 3 years and attend the Senta Bilong Helpim everyday, Monday to Friday, unless I am sick.

I am extremely happy to be working at the Senta coz the volunteers and the kids are so much fun. I help exercise kids, swim in the pool and help classes such as maths and spelling. Just staying at home in my house doesn't have the same kind of fun as being at the Senta!

Well I am not a trained volunteer but with the help of Claire, I have gained a little experience and have the confidence to work with this charity and will never ever give up even though there is no pay. I believe if it's God's call for me to do this work, every thing will be possible.

Lastly I would like to thank Bro. Jim, Harry Soni and Florence Robin for their support and not forgetting my Mum and Dad for their understanding.

Cheers! *Della*



*Della, supervising Willy (who is deaf) with his mathematics.*

**Have you seen our website???**

**[www.helpim.com](http://www.helpim.com)**

**Thanks to Paul Greene our new interactive website is up and running.  
Paul will update the website regularly with new photos, news articles etc.**

**You can even learn how to speak pigin!**

**We would like to recognise any of our supporters by listing their names/businesses in the sponsorship list. If you are interested in being included please contact Paul through the website.**



It is a special

*Sharon Akela also made her first communion—Shortly after Darren was sent to Australia for surgery, Brother James also arranged for Sharon to receive life-saving surgery. Sharon's brother Willy is deaf and regularly attends SBH, and was featured in last issue's "Meet the Children" section.*

privilege to share something of Passionist tradition with the people who we, ( Harry Soni and family ) called them friends both here and abroad, on a very special day for our son Darren, for receiving his first holy communion on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of October 2003.

Just about this time last year, the church chairman made an announcement that both grades four and five will have their R.I. (Religious Instruction taught on subjects regarding the first confession and the holy communion respectively. On that particular day, I approached his mother and explained to her on the out come of the chairman's message. We as Darren's parents were both worried, not because of our son's health, but because of the school on which he attended, where by no RI classes were given to

kids who were doing these grades. ( *Darren is in grade four, International Primary School.*)

A week later I approached a neighbour and explained the situation to him. He gave me the most comforting answer that I as his father longed to hear since the announcement. He simply told me that Darren could take his R.I. lessons at home. So it went smoothly since then, till it's final day where our son and your special friend stood proudly in a second row walking proudly towards the altar to receive his first ever *the Holy Communion*. It is a privilege to quote that Darren was and still is the happiest boy since. When alone, he often mumbles these words from the scriptures: "This is the Bread that came down from Heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live forever." (John 6:58).

***Our hope is to share his happiness and joy with friends who read this piece of news. It brought to you all, loud and clear, the message that Darren Soni loves you all.***

*Happy Christmas and a happy New Year to all my friends and all the Senta support groups.*

## Harry Soni



*Darren Soni on the occasion of his first communion*

*(Continued from page 2)*

license for a couple of years but because he has a disability, he is deaf, the police would not consider him. Eventually we got an understanding cop who was willing to go for a drive with Acobi and after that he had no hesitation in granting his license. It is a real eye opener for the local people also as they are amazed that anyone with a disability could learn to drive.

The other one to get his license is Mark Budi. Mark is a volunteer that looks after our store and so it is very handy having him driving as he can go and get the

goods for the store as he needs them. Both Mark and Acobi do the picking up and dropping off of the children which leaves me free to ride the bike.

Well this was supposed to be the last newsletter for 2003 [*Christmas is always so busy though! Big apologies that it didn't come out until new year. Ed.*] I hope all our readers, friends and benefactors had a very happy and blessed Christmas and we wish you all the very best for the new Year.

Thank you for your support.

***Bro. Jim***

### Initiation and the rituals of the penis gourd:

Hi! Readers, in the edition of the Senta Bilong Helpim Newsletters, I had an article on the traditional customs of Waromo which I hope you all enjoyed reading and to keep my promise, I have the initiations and its rituals for men to contribute for you all in this edition.

In the olden days, all male members, especially the first born in the family, are highly respected, and regarded as source of power and strength to ensure the well being of the family, and the community.

During meals in a family home, the father would always be the first to serve and have his meal, accompanied by his young adult sons. When they finish the mother and the daughters have their turn.

It had been believed that, men must be fed first in order to keep him fit at all times, prepared to resist in case of enemy attacks, for in battle field, hunger stricken warriors do not fight properly, get defeated and or get killed. Also men get fed first so that he is prepared if he is going out to sea for fishing at night. It has been and is still very strongly believed today that if a man does not abide by this rules, he will lose his power and strength to do well in work, fishing fighting and that he will not be successful what ever good work he is doing.

In his young adolescent, mans' first initiation ritual is of the penis gourd ( shell kambang as it is called in pidgin ) where the male adolescents are brought to the men's house and are given their rituals to put on there penis gourd for the first time. The rituals are conducted for the individual young adolescents prepared for their turns in the given ceremony and with the uncle from the father's side standing beside him, with the prepared penis gourd, holding it up and will say,

"Be like your fore father, be loyal to your mother, the land and reap its many fruits as your fore father did, do no wrong to others, only do good to all, as your fore father did, welcome he or she who is a foreigner to your home as your fore father did, and pass this on for the benefit of your sons and their grand sons, yet to come."

Completing these words, he than bends down to his nephew beside him and fits the penis gourd on and leads him out to make way for the next persons turn. Eventually, the ceremony ends with lots of food and a singing.

By Michael Kalele

Furniture  
Friends  
Freedom and Fun



Finishing off some wood-work



A showroom of much of the finished woodwork



A visible miracle!  
The hostel in progress...



An interesting mode of travel ...!



Irene—still playing in the cart! Who is hiding?



Michael Kalele: preparing "A Glimpse of Culture and Custom"



Noreen, with the computers sent by rotary Geelong



*In appreciation for the support given to us by so many people, we have decided to devote one page of this newsletter to advertising. Anyone who financially supports the Senta may like to send in their logo, phone number, web address etc.*

*There will be no charge associated with these advertisements.*

*We will endeavor to include everyone who sends their details in. (Size will depend on number of ads received). We will also advertise “For Sale” or “Coming Events”*

*Please email advertisements through the website [www.helpim.com](http://www.helpim.com)*

## The Container

By the time you receive this newsletter the container should have arrived at Vanimo.

Thanks to the generosity of those who attended the Dinner and Auction at Templestowe, and the hard work by the volunteers who packed and repacked the container. To Rocke Bros. who housed our valuables (that must have looked like a heap of rubbish to them) and in particular our thanks to Anthony and Joan, Denis, Marie and Tony. Without them it would never have happened.

Well Done Crew! When is the next one scheduled!!!

## Recent visitors to the Senta



*Department of Education visitors are, from the left: Stephen, John, Raphael and Frank.*

**Problem:** Broken Pool Pump  
**Solution:** Bro Jim Ring The Barwon Pool Shop, send email digital photos. Part available in 2 days

**Problem:** Cost of Transport for Parts  
**Solution:** Phone call to Rotary by David at Barwon Pool Shop. Costs covered. Parcel sent. Thanks Guys!

In addition to the visitors illustrated above, another lot of visitors were recently at the Senta.

Wayne Dillon and his wife Jane were accompanied by their children: Henry, Julie, Beverley and Cynthia. Wayne was a former Mission Aviation Fellowship pilot in Papua New Guinea. The family came up for a visit in a chartered plane. The girls have all been helping out at the Senta while the men have been doing some mechanical work for Glenda Giles at Green River High School.

It is almost Christmas and I want to say hello and happy Christmas greetings to all our Senta support group around the country. I want to thank you all for your support through out the year. It is with all your support that keeps the Senta going thank you very much for your big support.

All the work in the Senta is running very well, and the kids are all well and they are looking forward for the Christmas. The kids know that Christmas always bring good things to them, things like presents and holiday.

The Senta Hostel has been started

already and we are getting on well with the building, but we are having a bit of problem with the timber. I hope it will be alright for us to get some more timber to finish the building. We want to finish the building by Christmas but the problem is timber. If we have the timber we want, then we will finish the building by Christmas.

Back here in the Senta we are having a big problem with the 60 KVA generator. There is one phase of the motor, which is burnt. We have taken the motor out already and send it away to be rewind. It will cost us around K 5,000.00 to get it fixed. So we are running the

16 KVA generator now in the Senta.

I have to stop here and I will meet you all again in my next news letter.

Wishing you all a happy Christmas and a happy New Year to you all. The Lord may guide you all and look after you all during this time of Christmas and New Year.

Goodbye and God bless you all our Senta support group around the country .

### **Harry Soni**

*Editor's Note*

*Thanks to a generous response from supporters the generator is now fixed and back in business*

## A Glimpse of Culture and Custom: Custom from a woman's point of view

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Hi, I am **Noreen Pate**. I come from a family of five. three sisters including myself and two brothers. I am currently working with the Diocese of Vanimo, as the Secretary.

Well, well, well I am very glad to contribute something towards this Newsletter when being asked to do so, and I wish seasons greetings to you all.

My part of contribution of Article to this Newsletter would be on the WAYS AND TRADITION OF WOMEN IN WAROMO.

In my village women especially mothers play a very important role in the family. The Mother teaches her daughter the traditional skills in different trades, and shows her daughter how to keep up the cleanliness and tidiness of the work and the areas around the house.

The women must work without complaining otherwise people will see her complaining and definitely know that she is a lazy woman and was not taught well by her mother in doing the work.

Women must not enter or even go near a (*Men's House*) *haus boi* as it is called in pidgin ( *it is a house where men go there to talk or gossip on anything thing which women must not know about.*)

Women or Daughter must not eat first, the first serve of food must goes to the father and the other kids before the mother and the elder son/daughter as it will be seen by others that you would be a selfish woman.

Women are not to be wandering around the village, they are always near their own houses and then back into their houses.

Women before getting married, must know what is expected of the marriage life, so that you would be ashamed of what people may say about you.

*Having more to add to this.....I will continue in the next Newsletter.*

WISHING YOU A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2004...

Cheers. **Noreen**

With progress comes change... and frustration...

*Please note all subscriptions to SBHSAI are now from Jan 1st- Dec 31st*



The reasons for the delay in getting this newsletter out are too long and complicated to list. We offer our heartfelt apologies to Bro. Jim and our readers.....  
Claire and Pauline

*Our organization has grown and blossomed. It is hard to keep track of who is doing what...*

*The committee has decided that from February 2004 ALL correspondence should to be addressed to*

*The Secretary*

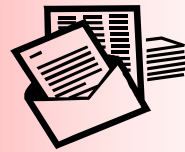
*Senta Bilong Helpim Aust Inc*

*P.O. Box 350*

*East Melbourne VIC 3002*

*Or through the email addresses listed on the website [www.helpim..com](http://www.helpim..com)*

*From there it will be forwarded to the appropriate people—Thank you*



**We are STILL in the process of obtaining tax deductibility status. In early February we will meet with the accountant to provide yet more documentation required by the tax department. We feel as though we have been promising this for many months but in true New Guinea time it will happen!**



Australian Government  
AusAID

Youth Ambassadors

The committee extends their best wishes to Karen Borshman who will take up residence at Warimo as the new physiotherapist at the Senta in March.

Karen is representing AusAID as part of their Young Ambassador Program

We look forward to hearing from you Karen.

Hopefully the next newsletter will feature Karen's first impressions of working at the Senta.

AusAID have funded Karen's position as a result of the ground work put in by Claire as a PALMS Volunteer. (AusAID partly fund the catholic lay missionary association PALMS)

Well done to both of them.

*With this issue we would like to extend our thanks to Victoria Higgins for the amazing job she has done as treasurer for Senta Bilong Helpim Aust Inc. since the beginning . Due to ill health and other commitments Victoria is now handing over the finances from February 2004 to Dr Merrilyn Murnane (See page 10) Those of you who so kindly donate through your credit card should contact Merrilyn if you have any changes or queries you wish to make as noted on Page 10 all correspondence regarding Senta Bilong Helpim Support Aust Inc should be addressed to  
**P.O. Box 350  
 East Melbourne Vic 3002***

Can you give on a regular basis?

Some supporters of the Senta are donating every month through their credit card. This enables Bro. Jim to plan ahead and work from a budget. It also enables staff to be employed with assurance that there will be funds to pay wages.

If you are able to do this just fill in the form below and the amount you specify will be deducted from your credit card each month.

You will be sent a receipt at the end of the financial year.

All cheques to be made out to "Senta Bilong Helpim Support (Aust) Inc".

Please accept my subscription to the Senta Bilong Helpim Support (Aust) Inc. Newsletter. I enclose

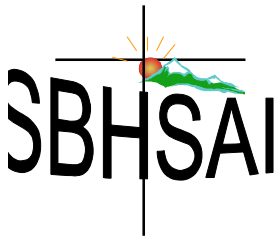
\$10 subscription for 2004 (please tick)

**OR**

Please find my annual membership fee of \$10 for SBHSAI for 2004

I would like to make a regular \$  donation towards the Senta Bilong Helpim, every  month/s

I am able to enclose \$  donation towards the Senta Bilong Helpim.



The Treasurer  
 Senta Bilong Helpim Support (Aust) Inc.  
 P.O. Box 350  
 East Melbourne VIC 3002

Ph 03 94192560

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## Thank you for your donations

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The Senta Bilong Helpim Support (Aust) Inc. has forwarded \$7000 to Bro. Jim in January to assist with the work of the Senta and the building of the new hostel. Thank you for your donations!

Can you, or your organization donate A\$20 per month? If we are able to get regular contributions Bro. Jim will be able to extend his care to others who need help.

Please do!



Change in dates

The dates for SBHSAI's membership and subscription has been changed to coincide with the calendar year. You are respectfully requested to fill in the coupon on page 11, if you have not already done so for this year.