

## Mother Nature gets a helping hand

When fire broke out on the front lawn of the IHM Motherhouse this past spring, no one dialed 911 or rushed to put the fire out. In fact, the fire had the sisters' blessing.

"Fire used to be a regular and frequent component of our landscape here in southern Michigan," explains Danielle Conroyd, project director for the Monroe Campus Long Range Master Plan. "Many of our local ecosystems such as prairies and certain wetlands burned frequently, and the fire stimulated many of the plant species to grow more vigorously and discouraged others that were not adapted to fire's heat.

"Today, many non-native plant species have invaded our natural fire-adapted ecosystems, decreasing the diversity of native plants and animals. By bringing fire back to a site, we can begin to give the competitive advantage back to the native species and restore the site to its former ecological health."

The burn was done with the cooperation and approval of the Monroe fire department, which issued a permit for it. The burn was conducted by David Borneman, of David Borneman LLC in Ann Arbor.

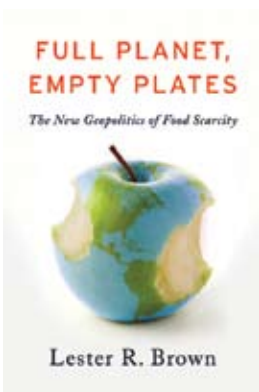
Prior to burning, "burn breaks" are created to help control the fire. The burn was done slowly and deliberately, with safety equipment on-hand to monitor and control its spread. It was conducted to minimize the amount of smoke produced and to direct it away from smoke-sensitive areas as much as possible. 🌞



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## Full Planet, Empty Plates

Reviewed by Nancy Seubert



If you don't live on the poverty line, it's not hard to think of the "issue" of food as a price-creep — annoying, but not alarming.

In *Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity*, Lester

Brown takes a longer look and notes that we are entering a new era of chronic food scarcity.

In 1950, the world was home to 2.5 billion people. There were two food reserves: grain harvested but not consumed in a given year and

cropland idled under U.S. farm programs. Today the same acreage supports 7 billion people, but the reserves are a third lower than they were just 10 years ago. The safety cushion to feed the world's families has dropped to 74 days. Land is stressed by soil erosion, water shortages and climate change, all of which can lower crop yields.

"Human demands have outrun the carrying capacity of the economy's natural support systems — its forests, fisheries, grasslands, aquifers, and soils. We are consuming the resource base itself..."

Current and anticipated food shortages are causing intense

competition for control of land and water resources. After explaining the factors contributing to this looming crisis, Brown identifies several strategies to avert a potential food breakdown, from the obvious (reducing excessive meat consumption) to the subtle (canceling biofuel mandates and making other changes to energy policy).

*Full Planet, Empty Plates* is a short, scary book that aims to wake readers up to the connections among food, the environment, energy and war. "Every country for itself" will not solve the problem. 🌞

Brown, Lester, *Full Planet, Empty Plates: The New Geopolitics of Food Scarcity*. W. W. Norton & Company, New York, 2012.

## A new kind of enlightenment: The IHM Chapel renovation

Jeffrey Ceo, LNHA

Ten years after the Motherhouse renovation, the IHM Sisters repeated history, preserving the sisters' heritage while updating the Motherhouse Chapel to meet the needs of the congregation. Lighting, acoustics and wiring from the 1930s were all addressed.

### Highlights

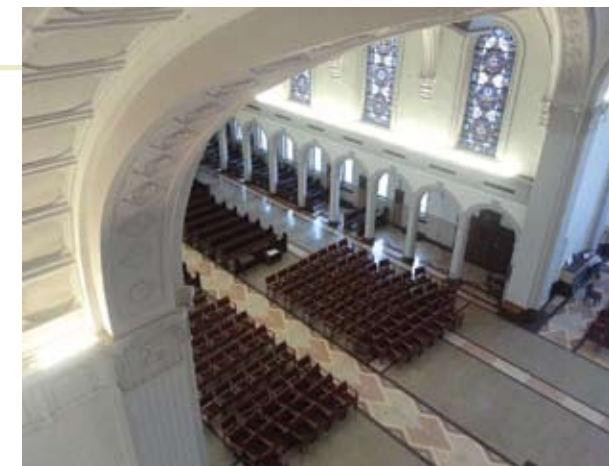
- Increased brightness from five-foot to 25-foot candles of illumination while cutting energy use by 75 percent, through the hybrid use of the latest technology in compact fluorescent fixtures, high-efficiency fluorescent fixtures and LED light fixtures. Kilowatt hours used are expected to drop from an estimated 60,611 to 15,475.
- Entirely replaced the brittle, outdated, and unsafe electrical

wires, connections, fuses, outlets, fixtures and controls with electrical materials that are all up to code.

- Replaced old lighting controls with preprogrammed lighting designed specifically for the different types of events held within the Chapel.
- Mounted three digital cameras in strategic locations, all controlled from a single console using pre-programmed equipment.
- Updated all microphones and amplifiers for improved sound quality.
- Added a new assistive hearing system that includes headphones or loops that can be used with hearing aids utilizing T-Coil technology.

- Provided for Internet connectivity to easily broadcast services and events via Web conferencing products such as Webex, Skype and others.

The improvements stem from the efforts of the Chapel Renovation Committee, which has been meeting since 2003 to discuss, discern and plan for the work. Many changes were considered, but not all passed muster. What the committee focused on made a significant impact in the participation and enjoyment of worship services — for the sisters and all the guests who attend functions. 🌞



## Celebrating Motherhouse volunteers

The 103 IHM Motherhouse volunteers were celebrated at their annual appreciation dinner for their 9,771 hours of service over the past year.

Melissa Hug was awarded the third annual Theresa Maxis Award for "exemplifying the spirit of Theresa Maxis...by her heartfelt service and generous gift of time." Melissa has ministered as a friend, companion, driver, librarian and all-around helper at the Motherhouse for 13 years.

Volunteers celebrating their third, fifth and 10th years of service received special acknowledgment; all received heartfelt thanks. 🌞



## Introducing...

The IHM Leadership Council is proud to introduce the sisters' new tagline: "Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice."

This brief statement communicates the essence of the community. "Deep Faith" grounds the congregation in its mission and ministry; "Courageous Spirit" reflects its heritage as risk-takers; and "Action for Justice" reflects the commitment to the liberating mission of Jesus.

