



Published by the LAVERNA
REGIONAL
COUNCIL OF THE
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER

**TRANSFORMED PEOPLE
TRANSFORM OTHERS**



LaVerna Regional Formation Team
(left to right) Lee Ann Niebuhr, JoAnn Boss,
Lizanne Schulrud, Carolyn Bekkers.
(Pauline Riedl photo missing)

During the LaVerna southeastern regional district gathering held in St. Joseph Catholic Church in Franklin, WI, Secular Franciscans read from psalm 84, the meeting opening prayer. One line from the psalm reads, “happy those whose strength is in you; they have courage to make the pilgrimage!” Psalm 84 appeals to God for special strength and desire to change others and ourselves.

The Secular Franciscans who gathered for this prayer reading, and who spent the day eagerly listening to the LaVerna Regional Formation Team, learned how to transform themselves and join others to become companions for an evangelical journey.

The morning presentation began with Lizanne Schulrud, LaVerna Regional Formation Team member, who said that Rule 6 asks Secular Franciscans united with the Church “should go

THE LAVERNA VISION

YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION ❖ SPRING 2011 EDITION

forth as witnesses and instruments of her mission among all people, proclaiming Christ by their life and words.” The opening psalm 84 surfaces once more: Our evangelization pilgrimage requires strength and courage.

THE DESIRE TO TRANSFORM

The French poet Antoine de Saint-Exupery (1900–1944) is reported to have said that if you are going to build a ship, do not go out and gather people together, collect wood, prepare tools and assign jobs. First, instill in the people a desire for the wide and endless sea. Transformation must be filled with yearning to become God’s image.

Lizanne said that our aspiration for daily conversion will install transformation and bring a quality of life to others. That quality becomes the wide and endless sea of life giving unity. Transformed people transform others. Collected texts, prepared readings, and assigned job descriptions should follow only later.

Formation team member JoAnn Boss said that “information, formation, and transformation are like logs placed on a fire.” These three elements go about and form our Franciscan consciousness; “but it is the Holy Spirit that enkindles the flame,” she added.

The Human Resource

Don Ryder understands the fidelity of core values in working relationships. He has taught that honesty and compassionate behavior communicated peace and harmony to angry and troubled city employees.

Employee conflicts need transformation, Don said. “You get angry and troubled employees together and ask what they need their work atmosphere to be like,” he added. Ryder says there is the Franciscan desire to his human resource approach to improve troubled employee relations. “St. Francis taught that there is good in everyone, and I help to bring it out.” Don says that individuals and city governments desire core values: respect, honesty, vision, stewardship, professionalism, and compassion.



Don Ryder, SFO, smiles on his improving the City of Wausau Fire Department troubled work atmosphere. Photo courtesy of *City Pages*.

Please see **The Human Resource**, page 10

La Verna Regional Executive Council and Formation Team

Minister

Ken Beattie, SFO
Portiuncula Fraternity – Franklin
512 Pioneer Road
Sheboygan, WI 53081-8705
(414) 380-3850
beatiesfo@aol.com

Vice-Minister

Jim Carlson, SFO
St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity – Wind Lake
236 Elizabeth St.
Whitewater, WI 53190
(262) 473-3130
james.carlson@wicourts.gov

Treasurer

Peter Bekkers, SFO
St. Joseph Fraternity - Appleton
W6855 St. Mary's Dr.
Greenville, WI 54942
(920) 757-9027
taxmannatp@gmail.com

Secretary

Kathy Sutliff, SFO
St. John Neumann Fraternity – Rhinelander
1015 Thayer St.
Rhinelander, WI 54501
(715) 369-3367
ksut517@charter.net

Spiritual Assistant

Lester Bach, OFM Cap
4123 Monona Dr.
Madison, WI 53716
(608) 222-6238
lbofmcap@aol.com

Councilor – Central

Patricia D Yates, SFO
St. John Neumann Fraternity – Rhinelander
420 Michigan St #4
Eagle River, WI 54521
(715) 479-4631
Patricia811@excite.com

Councilor – UP & Fox Valley

Bob Henning, SFO
St. Anthony's Fraternity – Marquette
210 Thunderchief St.
Gwinn, MI 49841
(906) 346-6727
bmjhsfo@aol.com

Councilor – UP and Fox Valley

Jeanne M Thill, SFO
St. Francis Fraternity – Escanaba
4179 II Road
Garden, MI 49835
(906) 644-2382
athill@uplogon.com

Councilor - Southeast

Rodney Knier, SFO
Holy Innocents Fraternity – Manitowoc
24228 Fish & Game Rd.
Kiel, WI 53042
(920) 946-9029
rodvalknier@verizon.net

Formation Team

Carol Bekkers, SFO
St. Joseph Fraternity – Appleton
W6855 St. Mary's Dr.
Greenville, WI 54942
(920) 757-9027
cjbekkers@new.rr.com

Pauline Riedl, SFO
St. James Fraternity – Wausau
628 ½ Augusta Ave.
Wausau, WI 54403
(715) 842-8263
pauline1945@netzero.net

JoAnn Boss, SFO
St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity – Wind Lake
Sussex, WI 53089
(262) 250-9251
ed-joann@execpc.com

Lee Ann Niebuhr, SFO
Queen of Universe Fraternity
Woodruff, WI
lamniebuhr@gmail.com

Lizanne Schulrud, SFO
St. Josaphat Fraternity - Milwaukee
2471 N. Gordon Pl., Milwaukee, WI 53212
(414) 372-6593
schulrud@sbcglobal.net

The La Verna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The area is divided into four districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley and Upper Michigan. *La Verna Vision* is a vehicle of communication with the LaVerna Region. It presents a forum for presenting information and insights that relate to the SFO Way of Life. Permission to copy materials printed in *LaVerna Vision* is given freely except where the copyright is specifically reserved to the author or artist. Please credit *LaVerna Vision* if you copy any of the articles. For further information about the La Verna Region and the Secular Franciscan Order, www.lavernasecularfranciscans.com

The *La Verna Vision* newsletter is published three times a year. Deadline for submitting articles are as follows:

Spring issue—March 1; Summer issue—July 1; Winter issue—November 1

La Verna Vision editors: Ed Boss, SFO, ed-joann@execpc.com (262) 250-9251; asst. editor, Bob Henning, SFO, bmjhsfo@aol.com

Reflection

Lester Bach OFM Cap - Regional Spiritual Assistant



Being Who We Are

Sometimes we need a little push to know who we are as individuals. We link ourselves to family, parish, organizations, cities or towns, jobs, faith, relatives, or whatever. We need some form of relationship so that we have a "sense of belonging."

This is normal for human beings. When there is no one to relate to, no one who cares about us, no one who knows our name - loneliness, isolation, perhaps depression or attempts to get attention begin to blossom in our lives. A song in the musical "Carnival" puts it simply when the young girl sings: *I come from the town of Mira. ... What I like the best of Mira, is everybody knows my name! Can you imagine that?*

What is true of individuals is also true in a Franciscan community. A fraternity is not just people who get together monthly or more often. It is where we share our individual skills and gifts with one another. We use our individual abilities to build a strong, loving, fraternal life. In turn, both the individuals and the fraternity offer the church and the world a model of what the Kingdom of God looks like. *What I like the best in fraternity, is everybody knows me and my name. Can you imagine that?*

Fraternity life requires inter-action that helps us trust one another. Let's look at a few of the qualities that reflect the gospel and show what a gospel community looks like.

1. **Faithfulness.** A lifetime commitment, i.e. profession in the SFO, requires individuals to embrace the entire SFO Rule. It requires individual Franciscans to read and implement the SFO constitutions of the SFO. The constitutions are the first interpreters of the Rule. Anyone who is ignorant of the rule and/or the constitutions will find *faithfulness* difficult to achieve. *Faithfulness* also requires ...

2. **Ongoing formation** for Franciscans. This requires a persistent effort by local councils to provide *ongoing formation* at fraternity gatherings. Some issues: how to deal with political issues that cause separation; moral issues among people that cause division; problems in parishes and dioceses that pit Catholics against one another. Stubborn and rigid opinions, whether political, ecclesial, or personal, can



hinder people from seeking the common good.

Franciscans do have differing opinions. But Franciscans have a perspective that invites us to use good tools to create understanding among us.

3. **Listening** requires us to respectfully hear someone who has a differing opinion. *Listening* gives us an understanding of why people think the way they do. We often refuse to listen while waiting to get "our" opinion across to these "others." When we understand why people think differently, and they understand our reasons, there is the possibility of friendship. Together we can choose ways for the good of all or most of the people. We work together rather than walking our own path and acting as though *never the twain shall meet!*

4. We might call it *conversion*, or in another sense - **dialogue**. It is required by the SFO Rule. Franciscans are called to engage in *dialogue*. We seek unity even if we disagree. Instead of rigidly clinging to personal opinions, we begin to understand that a good community can have differences of opinion without walking away from one another. Often a third possibility may be better than either of our individual opinions. *They should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue ...* (SFO Rule #19) This is not an option for Franciscans. It is required! **Ongoing formation** thrives on **dialogue and promotes it!**

This brief excursion into fraternity life makes it evident that local councils have an exciting task on their hands. Fraternities can withstand differences only if there is an acceptance of the "other," and a willingness to listen. Change (*conversion*) on all sides is possible. To neglect respectful conversation is a failure in **faithfulness** to the SFO Rule of life.



He who thinks that he is finished is finished. How true. Those who think that they have arrived, have lost their way. Those who think they have reached their goal, have missed it.

Henri Nouwen - *The Genesee Diary*

LaVerna Minister's Message – Sprint 2011

Greetings Sisters and Brothers,

This will be my last letter to you via our *LaVerna Vision* newsletter. As your elected regional minister, I have traveled with you over the years on a long and very enjoyable journey.

Over the years, I have been blessed—to become involved in our National Family! There are so members I would love to meet and share stories.

As I ponder those eventful years since we began to form the LaVerna Region, I can only say they have been great. Getting to know each of you through the regional SFO activities, sharing our “vision” of what the region should be, and how we would live out the Gospels in our Regional Fraternity have been the serving highlights as your Minister.

Your example of generosity and fraternal love is by far the more admirable qualities of our Region.

Truly, the Holy Spirit has witnessed through all of you. I could not have accepted to be your Regional Council servant leader, if it were not for all those who stood beside me and made my journey that much easier. Also, the strength of the regional council working together was an example for each local fraternity council to follow.

Another joyful experience was to share time with Secular Franciscans through fraternal visitations. I have learned so much by being a witness to the quality of family in each of your fraternities. Spending time talking to you about how you live our Rule and share ways to improve our Living the Gospels, has brought richness into my own life.

I feel that I belong to more than my local fraternity – each of yours has been so much a part of me through the years. It is like being a member to all the local LaVerna Region fraternities.

Arranging and attending our Regional Chapters each year has been more than just a “meeting.” It was more like having a family reunion. The coming together of all within the Region brings about such joy that only a family could give. Sharing stories with each of you about what your family has done in the past year is so much like a family reunion. I am very blessed to be a member of the LaVerna Franciscan Family.

Then there is the National Chapters – if you think the reunion we have at our Regional Chapters is great – well, the National Fraternity is just as great but on a much larger scale. Thank you for allowing me to take part in this larger Franciscan Family.

I offer thanks to so many, many years allowed to serve you,



Ken Beattie (center) Vice Minister, Jim Carlson (left), and Central District Councilor Patricia Yates review the 2011 LaVerna Regional Plans at the 2010 November council retreat at the Marywood Spirituality Center in Arbor Vitae, WI.

but the only words that could really express these feelings are—God has been good to me, and it is because you have been good to me, and allowed me to be in the right space at the right time.

Finally, I wish to leave you with a few thoughts...

1. Remember that we are not alone, our Franciscan Family is large, and we are called to serve each other in ways only the Holy Spirit can ask of us.
2. When the Holy Spirit calls us – respond by saying yes. This response will bring such joy and love into your own life that words cannot really say.
3. Remember that the Gospels tell us to feed the hungry, cloth the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned. It is by living these words and the many other things that Our Lord Jesus taught us that will bring true Franciscan Joy to each of us and those we serve.
4. One of the greatest messages I can say is, Love each other, and this Love has to be unconditionally. No matter what causes disruption in our lives, the unconditional Love will keep us strong as a Franciscan Family.
5. Becoming Peace Makers is what we as Franciscans are called to be. Bringing reconciliation to our communities is one of the strong points of our way of Living the Gospels. We are to be instruments of peace – bringing together people who have differences, through conversation rather than injury to each other through violence. Be that instrument that we are called to be!
6. Hope, that one day all people will be together as one. The Grace of the Holy Spirit places us as Franciscans into our communities to bring the Hope and Joy of knowing Jesus Christ to all we meet. We are to be examples of this Peaceful Living.
7. Finally – be kind to one other and grow with each other through the Living of the Gospels; serve each other with humility; and love each other as our Lord Jesus does for each of us.

Peace and All Joy, Ken

OUR ENVIRONMENT



Judy Stouffer, SFO

Spring spruce-ups: Low VOC PAINTS

Spring is often the season for sprucing up your house, inside or out, with a fresh coat of paint. Paints beautify and preserve, but our modern paints also emit something called volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, that aren't good for us.

VOCs contribute to ozone and smog formation and are linked to respiratory illnesses and memory impairment. The good news is that most paint companies have introduced lines of low- or zero-VOC paints for both indoor and exterior use.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has standards that manufacturers must meet in order to label their paints as low or zero-VOC. That makes it easy to shop for a low VOC paint. Only paint that meets the EPA standard can have "low" or "zero" VOC printed on its label.

Low-VOC water-based (latex or acrylic) paints perform as well as standard interior and exterior paints. The prices are usually the same as standard paints, too. They also come in the same rainbow of colors as other interior and exterior house paints. A nice bonus to using a low VOC paint is that they have little or no odor. You shouldn't notice any strong "new paint smell" even while you are painting with them.

If you prefer oil-based paints, environmentally friendly paints based on plant oils, instead of petroleum, are now being made. These paints are available nationwide, but aren't as easy to find as the low-VOC latex paints. Companies like BioShield and AFM have taken the lead in creating these new plant-based oil paints. They can be used the same way and in the same places petroleum oil-based paint is used.

Exterior and interior wood stains and sealants are available in water-based low-VOC versions now, and in plant-oil based versions, too. And some companies are even making "milk" paints again. These paints, which our grandparents used, aren't as durable as our modern paints but they are environmentally friendly and easy to use as well.

With all these choices, it's easy to find a paint that does the job, is healthy to use and safe for the environment too. Happy painting! (copyright © 2011 Judy Stouffer, B.S., M.S., SFO. All rights reserved)



IN LOVING MEMORY OF JEAN ANN PLATZ, SFO

During her many eventful years, Jean Platz professed into the Secular Franciscan Order in 1951 at St. Francis Fraternity, Milwaukee, and was the recipient of the National Third Order Achievement Award in 1966. As a SFO, Jean held the following offices and council positions: local fraternity minister, vice-minister, treasurer and formation director. On the Provincial level: minister—three years and regional representative—six years. On the LaVerna Region level: vice-minister—three years, and director of formation—three years. She was editor of the *LaVerna Vision* newsletter for three years. Jean was an inspirational member to St. John Neumann Fraternity.

At age 81, on April 11, 2011, Jean went to meet the Lord. She died at the Josephine Haus in Rhinelander after a courageous battle with cancer. She was born December 30, 1929 in Milwaukee, and attended Holy Ghost Grade School and Mercy High School in Milwaukee. Jean graduated from Alverno College School of Nursing (BSN) and was the recipient of the 1974 Outstanding Alumnae Award. In further education, she attended Marquette University in Milwaukee to become a Parish Nurse. She was also a certified emergency room nurse.

Her employment started in 1946–47 in Milwaukee as a cashier at Gimbles Department Store; Milwaukee Public Library (1947–1951); Milwaukee County Emergency Hospital as the Staff and Charge Nurse (1955-1959); at Milwaukee County Emergency Hospital (1962-1963); Minh-Quy Hospital in Kontum, South Vietnam (1964-1971); and St Mary's Hospital in Rhinelander as the evening supervisor and ER nurse (1972-1993).



Jean Platz and Annie

Her hobbies included watercolor painting, puzzles, knitting, and reading, arts & crafts, fishing and playing scrabble, computer games, and taking Enrichment Classes. She had many dogs and loved them all.

Jean also did many volunteer activities, which included organizing a

Please see **Jean Platz**, page 6

From page 5
Jean Platz

Parish Nurse Program. She was a former member of Parish Council and Adult Education Committee, a former Eucharistic Minister and lector and a Present presenter for annual Pre-Marriage Retreat. She also was in South Vietnam from 1963–71 as administer and “jack of all trades” at Minh-Hospital, working with primitive Montagnards under auspices of Catholic Relief Services and Bishop Paul Seitz. She spent three months in Liberia relieving a Sister of the Precious Blood at a primitive clinic. In the USA she volunteered at the Free Clinic, Food Pantry, Domestic Violence Shelter, Marywood Spirituality Center, Mental Health Unit.

Jean is survived by her brothers; Gordon (Harriet) Platz of Milwaukee, Marvin (Margaret) of Palm Harbor, FL., two nieces and three nephews. Her parents and a

nephew David Platz preceded her in death.

A Mass of Christian burial was celebrated on April 20, 2011 at Nativity of Our Lord Parish (St Joseph’s site) with Father John Gerritts officiating. Burial at Mount Olivet Cemetery in Milwaukee.



Regional News

LA VERNA REGION COUNCIL ELECTION NOMINEE BIOGRAPHIES

Jim Carlson—Nominee for Regional Minister, james.carlson@wicourts.gov

James L. Carlson, born 1/24/44. Professed (11/11/2001) and active member of St. Pascal Baylon Fraternity, Wind Lake, WI. Local fraternity: past vice minister and minister; Youth/Young Adult and Commissions/JPIC contact person-8 years. La Verna Region level: All Commissions Coordinator/JPIC contact-6 years. Regional Councilor-Fox Valley District-3 years. Current Vice Minister. History Book and Website contact-3 years. I once presented at Regional Chapter about recruiting new members and hold this as something important that I would like to follow up on.

Archdiocese of Milwaukee: Past member and Chairman of Archdiocese of Milwaukee Pastoral Council-4 years; past delegate to the APC District committee. Co-lay Director, Milwaukee Cursillo.

Single/never married. Occupation: Circuit Judge, Walworth County for 31 years. Parish: St. Patrick Catholic Church, Whitewater. Past member and Chair, Parish Council-13 years; past trustee-10 years. Involved in parish activity such as lector, human concerns, stewardship, adult formation committee.

Jeff Gumz—Nominee for Regional Vice Minister and Councilor, jagumz@gmail.com

Jeff grew up in rural North Central Wisconsin and graduated from Colby High School in 1988. He next attended UW Oshkosh and graduated in 1992 with a Bachelors Degree in Psychology, with a minor in Spanish. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, Jeff spent 1992—1994 in the cloud forests of Eastern Ecuador working with sheep and guinea pig farmers.

He taught ESL and Spanish in Haysville, Kansas while earning a Masters Degree in Education from Wichita State University from 1995-1999. He has taught Spanish for NWTC in Green Bay and St. Norbert College in De Pere. He has been a teacher at historic Green Bay East High since 1999, where he began as a bilingual social studies teacher. Currently, he is teaching U.S. History and World Affairs, Psychology and AP Psychology.

Jeff is a member of St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Church in Green Bay and St. Joseph Catholic Church in Champion. He has served both parishes as Eucharistic Minister and Lector. Since 2010 Jeff has served minister of the St. Ann Fraternity in Green Bay. His Servant Leader philosophy is ***you’re not dictatorial ... you don’t put yourself forward ... you are collaborative, and seek to exalt the gifts of your brothers and sisters.*** In his free time, Jeff enjoys reading, taking long walks, and visiting his wife’s family in México. Jeff resides in the town of Scott with his lovely wife Vianney and two sons, Jay and Santiago.

Kathy Sutliff—Nominee for Regional Secretary or District Councilor, ksut517@charter.net

I was professed in 1991 and have been active on the local level since that time. I was vice minister for two terms and minister for one term and am currently formation director for our St. John Neumann Fraternity in Rhinelander. I was councilor on the first regional council until I became ill and had to resign. I then accepted an appointment as secretary for the region in 2003 and have been elected for two additional terms. I attended two Quinquennial Gatherings over the years and know that being involved at all levels of the SFO has helped me understand the Order as being more than a local “group.”

Kathy Sutliff nominee biography, continued from page 6

I retired 9 years ago from Oneida County Health Department after working there for two years as staff nurse and 25 years as director/health officer. I adopted two children who are now grown and have three grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren. Currently I work for the state immunization program part time but plan to retire (again) in March of 2012. I have been on my parish council, been a minister of the Eucharist and a sacristan in my parish and am a volunteer at the cancer center here in Rhinelander. If elected I will do the best I can to be a servant

Lizanne Schulrud—Nominee for Regional Secretary or Treasurer, schulrud@sbcglobal.net

I am a professed member of the St. Josaphat Fraternity in Milwaukee. The Basilica of St. Josaphat is also my parish. I hold the basilica in great affection as the place of my return to the Church and fostering of my Franciscan vocation. I am currently serving as fraternity treasurer, and also assist with Initial Formation. In addition, I am always on the lookout for formation and relationship building opportunities beyond our monthly gatherings. On the Regional level I have had the joy and privilege to serve on the Formation Team and the Nomination Committee. Through this service, I have met so many of you. I am in awe at the depth and variety of ways our SFO Rule is lived out daily. I am on the Board of the Southeast Wisconsin Initiative for Fair Trade. I also do the bookkeeping for their retail store on a volunteer basis.

I am widowed with two grown daughters. My sisters live with and care for our beloved father. In turn, I provide respite care for them. I have been lucky enough to do a bit traveling but am equally content to sit in my back yard and marvel at St. Francis' insight about the interconnectedness of all living things.

In my paying job, I am the Accounts Specialist for a nurse staffing and consulting agency. That means I keep track of many details and prepare lots of documents for our customers and employees; skills that should translate effectively to the office of Secretary.

Peter J. Bekkers—Nominee for Regional Council Treasurer, taxmannatp@gmail.com

Born in Combined Locks, WI 9/25/34 and grew up in the Fox Valley area where I lived all my life. I married my wife, Carol, 10/5/57 and together we reared 8 children: 3 girls and 5 boys. All of them are now married and have blessed us with 18 grandchildren ranging in age from 25 years old down to 2 year old (4 are adopted).

I've spent my life in the accounting profession working for several companies taking early retirement in 1990 to devote my efforts to my business as a tax professional. I owned my own company doing personal and corporate taxes part time for over 50 years until I sold the business in January 1998. At that time I agreed to work for the buyer for 5 years. I finally retired on May 31, 2003. I am a charter member of (NATP) the "National Association of Tax Professionals." I attended the first 19 Annual Tax Conferences and was invited to attend their 25th anniversary conference in San Francisco in July of 2004, where I was presented with several awards and recognized as one of its founders. I also traveled the country teaching taxes during the early years of NATP's existence. It now has over 21,000 members nationwide.

I spend my retirement doing volunteer work wherever and whenever I can. This way I can do as much good as God calls me to do. I feel that is the best way to stay young by staying active. I drive for Theda Clark Hospital Auxiliary in Neenah, WI as a volunteer. I'm also the treasurer for five different "non-profit" organizations at the present time. This helps me to stay active and involved. Most of this time is spent volunteering as the treasurer for the Fox Valley Warming Shelter, Inc. We just built a permanent building in Appleton during 2010 where we shelter homeless adults averaging nearly 40 people per night. At my retirement, I promised myself that "I would not spend my retirement practicing being dead." If re-elected, I'll do my best to fulfill this commitment. Peter's mailing address and phone: W6855 St. Marys Dr., Greenville, WI 54942, (920) 757-9027

Joanne Guzik—Nominee for Regional Executive Councilor, guzi@frontiernet.net

Born in Chicago, I moved to Rhinelander in 1974 when my son and daughter were still children. I have been a parishioner of Nativity of Our Lord for more than half of my life. As living proof that many SFO vocations take shape following a personal invitation, I was invited by Jean Platz to "come and see" what following Jesus in the Secular Franciscan way looks like. Up until that time, I knew only a little about the Poverello of Assisi. However, the more I learned about St. Francis, the more I knew that the Franciscan spirit was the way I wanted to follow Jesus. I was professed in the St. John Neumann Fraternity in May 1982.

In the past, I have served my fraternity as secretary for several terms and bulletin editor. Since October 2009, I have served as the St. John Neumann local fraternity minister. I enjoy seeing the individual and fraternal growth that sometimes follows our working through the minor challenges of fraternity life.

Joanne Guzik nominee biography, continued from page 7

For the past four years I have been retired from a long professional life in nursing. Following a good solid base in medical nursing in three fine Chicago and Rhinelander Catholic hospitals, I followed my dream into public health nursing. In 1981, I was privileged to start a Hospice program in Woodruff, Wisconsin. The program is still a major hospice care provider in northern Wisconsin as part of the Ministry Health Care organization.

Retirement has been good to me. It has provided me enough time to home school my youngest grandson, now twelve years old. While he enjoys summer vacations from schooling, I enjoy gardening and doing a variety of volunteer jobs for the Rhinelander Food Pantry, which operates out of the back of our parish-owned thrift shop.

Being slow at most everything I undertake, I think I am finally ready to serve on the Regional Council. Since becoming local minister, I have become more interested in the next level up in our Secular Franciscan family. I have begun to become acquainted with some of the current Regional officers and nominees for the next Regional Council to be elected in June. Just as when I first attended local fraternity gatherings over thirty years ago, again I like what I see! If elected, I will do my best to serve as a La Verna Regional Councilor.

Rodney Knier, Nominee for Regional Executive Councilor, rodvalknier@frontier.com

The lives of Sts. Francis and Clare have always been my perception of what Jesus intended for his friends to live in closest imitation of Him. I find that the Rules of our Secular Franciscans Order, faithfully followed and practiced, offer the fullest opportunity for daily transformation. They help carry crosses of one another in fraternal life and especially for my wife Valerie and me.

Professed in 1991, I served as local minister and secretary of Holy Innocents Fraternity, Manitowoc, and regional councilor for nine years. In my joyful ministry with Holy Innocents Fraternity and the Manitowoc County area, I share ministries in mission outreach works: daily corporal and spiritual works of mercy in prison, street and home-to-home. In addition, I work with hospitals, nursing homes, parish, and in evangelization, consolation, and conversion works.

Just as Jesus, Sts. Francis, Clare and a host of witnesses, we need to serve in whatever capacity for God's will. I am finding everyday that the Secular Franciscan Order best helps me make good of Psalm 51 in my life endeavors.

Bob Henning, Nominee for Regional Executive Councilor, bmjhsfo@aol.com

I was born and raised in Chicago. I served in the US Army for over 21 years. I have been married to Mary Jane for over 40 years and we have 3 children and 19 grandchildren. I currently manage a calibration laboratory and we live in Gwinn, MI. I have taught and been involved in different religious education programs for over 30 years. We attended our first Marriage Encounter (M.E.) weekend in 1976 in Germany and eventually became a Team Couple and presented talks at M.E. weekends. We served on the Liturgical Planning Committee for St. Louis the King parish when the new church was being planned.

We are currently members of the St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Gwinn, MI. I was professed November 1996 and have been deeply involved with the Secular Franciscan Order both at the local and regional levels. I am currently the Minister of the St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity in Marquette, MI, and I am concluding my second term as a LaVerna Region Councilor. I am familiar with the duties of a Councilor and I am willing to serve if elected. Bob Henning's address: 210 Thunderchief St., Gwinn, MI 49841,

Ed Boss, Nominee for Regional Executive Councilor, ed-joann@execpc.com

I am requesting that my name be added as an election candidate for the LaVerna Regional district councilor position. I am an active member of St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity, Wind Lake, WI. Professed: May 1985 at St. Francis – St. Louis Fraternity, Chicago. Over the years, I have served on local fraternity council positions as formation director, vice-minister and presently serve as minister. I had served as a non-voting formation member for the LaVerna Regional Executive Council. I am currently the editor of the *LaVerna Vision* newsletter. As district councilor, I would like to help fraternities continue on their Annual Report themes and help SFOs find ways of becoming productive. I am most willing to serve for the evangelization of the Secular Franciscan Way of Christ's message to the LaVerna Region.

My wife JoAnn and I are members of St. James Catholic Church in Menomonee Falls. One of my ministry contributions is gardening in our "Field of Dreams" church garden with parish members. The local food pantry receives all of our harvested and washed vegetables. All fresh vegetables are packed in clear, zip-locked bags with assorted home cooking recipes. Ed's home address: W222 N8172 Plainview Parkway, Sussex, WI 53089, phone: (262) 250-9251.

Local Fraternity—

ST. FRANCIS FRATERNITY MINISTER ASKS SFOs TO CONSIDER SPIRITUAL ASSISTANT TRAINING

Jeanne Thill, Minister of St. Francis Fraternity, sees the vital need for LaVerna Region Secular Franciscans to study and become Spiritual Assistants. In her fraternity February 2011 newsletter, Jeanne writes that St. Francis Fraternity in Escanaba is blessed with members who embrace Franciscan awareness and practice the main qualities to begin their spiritual assistant training correspondence course.

“We do in fact have a number of fraternity members who qualify in all respects,” Jean wrote in the newsletter, “and that they have knowledge about SFO life.” She asks that everyone in her fraternity to re-read Fr. Lester Bach’s *Franciscan Family Connection*, the

preparation book designed to form people who serve as regional or fraternity Spiritual Assistants.

In the 1990’s The Conference of National Spiritual Assistants developed a program to train spiritual assistants. Originally, the book title was *Life-Giving Union*, but the text has since been revised and renamed to its 2011 title, *Franciscan Family Connection*. Its 19 chapters are used as a correspondence course, and the course will take 19 months before becoming a spiritual assistant. Secular Franciscans must have at least five years of active membership for consideration as a serious candidate. For further information on studying the *Franciscan Family Connection* correspondence course, please read Fr. Lester Bach’s “Reflections” article in the *LaVerna Vision*, 2010 winter newsletter edition.

Sacred Heart Fraternity Embraces New SFO Members

by Carol Derozier, SFO

Chris Brill, Barbara Studener and Marybeth Volkens, welcome to the Secular Franciscan Order! The Sacred Heart Fraternity granted permanent profession to three women on March 6, 2011 at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish in Oshkosh. It is interesting to note the events that brought them to the journey they have recently completed. In observing these, I can see three ways they were drawn to the Secular Franciscan Order. These women come from varied backgrounds.



Left to right: Newly professed SFOs, Chris Brill, Barbara Studener, Marybeth Volkens and Carol Derozier, Sacred Heart Fraternity Formation Director

Her sister influenced one. She saw subtle changes in her sister and her married life. This was a personal connection.

Another was curious about what she saw in a fellow parish member. What was that wooden “T”? Why was this older woman so full of energy and joy? This was our influence on others and the example we give.

Yet her spiritual director referred another. He understood her needs and gifts, and felt that Franciscan direction and fraternal life would be for her.

All of us search for our True Love and the persons we were created to be. These new Franciscans began the process with Sunday morning formation sessions. Along with professed Franciscans, they explored the life of St. Francis. They saw his transformation, his growth in humility and simplicity. As we shared our own stories, they realized that our journeys are not that different from that of Francis. They began to grow in their sense of detachment from the world, with its unnecessary concerns and material pressures. We became a little “family.”

As they reached the end of their initial formation, they found that they had become closer to Christ. Prayer, study, penance and openness to the action of the Holy Spirit has produced fruits: The fruits of a more loving, patient and forgiving family life; more acceptance and confidence in their work places and best of all, the joy that comes from letting go of ourselves and living in imitation of St. Francis. They are becoming the women they were created to be!

They are now entering the embrace of their larger “family” the Sacred Heart Fraternity and join us on our fraternal journey. They join us in our on-going formation as we continue to grow in our love for Jesus, St. Francis and each other. We want to be like Francis: “Head over heels in love with Jesus”!

JIM CARLSON—A MAN WITH A MISSION



Archdiocese of Milwaukee mission workers, Tom Genthner (left) [St Mary Parish, Kenosha] administers a glaucoma test to their client, a Dominican Republic villager, while Jim Carlson, SFO, observes and translates medical instructions in Spanish.

While the 2011 January weather blanketed Wisconsin with ice and snow, Jim Carlson boarded an airplane headed for the Dominican Republic. However, his Caribbean island trip was not to enjoy a warm and sunny vacation, but to volunteer as a missionary eye clinic worker. Jim's assignment was to travel and work with fifteen Archdiocese of Milwaukee mission workers and successfully set up medical workstations at La Sagrada Familia, (Holy Family). La Sagrada Familia is a sister parish of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

Over three days there was one eye doctor who examined 518 La Sagrada Familia parish villagers. Jim and the fifteen Archdiocese of Milwaukee

mission workers assisted the doctor, testing for close and distant vision, glaucoma, filling prescriptions for eye-drops or medications, and finding, fitting or ordering prescribed glasses.

La Sagrada Familia parish is located in the province of Azua in the southwest corner of the Dominican Republic. (The Dominican Republic shares the Caribbean Island called Hispaniola with Haiti.) Sabana Yegua is the largest town in the parish with a population of 25,000. This is where the parish center is located, and the main church seats 300. Connected with the church and rectory is the parish hall; the sewing and cosmetology centers and the computer lab; and a health center with a clinic, pharmacy, and laboratory.

Carlson also visited the new barrio El Rosario chapel, where the LaVerna Region had earlier donated an image of St. Francis. After handing out *Prayer of St Francis* cards, the Jim toured the church boundaries and noted the pressing need for parish property fence repairs. On his final mission day, Jim, who is the Vice Minister of the LaVerna Region, visited the Paz y Bien [Peace and Good] Capuchin convent; he also met with the Dominican Republic National Executive Council of the Secular Franciscan Order. During that meeting, he spoke with the villagers about the Archdiocese of Milwaukee mission outreach programs and exchanged additional information about the church's religious Orders.

The first such Archdiocesan mission occurred in 2004 and has grown annually; both in numbers of participating personnel, numbers of patients treated and types

of dental procedures provided. For more information about this and other outreach projects visit the new Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation LaVerna website page, www.lavernasecularfranciscans.org.

Additional thanks go to Lizanne Schulrud, SFO for her photo display of the La Sagrada Familia parish. At each 2011 LaVerna Regional district gathering, Lizanne presented a talk about the Archdiocesan valuable missionary work for the parish and the urgent need to build a new fence around the church property.

Total donations collected from the 2011 LaVerna district gatherings raised \$589.95 for the repair of the El Rosario chapel fencing. The collected amount was most generous and will be greatly appreciated. A \$589.95 check was mailed to Office of World Missions, attn: Sr. Fran Cunningham, SSSF, and the funds will be transferred to the Sister Parish in the Dominican Republic.

From page 1

The Human Resource

Don Ryder, hired as the city of Wausau's part-time safety officer, has successfully instilled his worker and management conflict resolutions to convert the tense atmosphere of two municipal departments from toxic and troubled to unity and joviality.

Don worked with professional counselors and together they

teamed up to address hazing pranks, the steady stream of union grievances per year, and ongoing work tensions. The proof of success: just one union grievance in the past year from the Wausau fire and public works departments. Ryder was asked by city council to speak at conflict resolution retreats for the City of Wausau employees; he has given similar presentations at the Thomas Moore Club.

Don is a member of St. James Fraternity in Wausau and the 2009 recipient of the Secular Franciscan Order National Peace Award for his continued work with the Kenya Water Project. "All my core value ideas come from Franciscan roots: believe in the goodness of each person you come across." Don said.

"I'm just an instrument of peace. I used to think that you had to connect all the dots to resolve conflicts. Now, I learn there is only one dot—God."

La Verna Regional Fraternity SFO
CURRENT AND PROPOSED BUDGET COMPARISON
FOR PERIOD ENDED DEC 31, 2011 & 2012

	TOTAL Budget 2011 Approved 6/26/2010	Proposed Budget 2012 Approval Pending
REVENUE:		
DONATIONS -----	1,500.00	1,500.00
INTEREST INCOME & CASH BK BONUS-	310.00	300.00
INTEREST ENDOWMENT FUND	888.50	888.50
SPECIAL MEMORIALS -----	1,000.00	1,000.00
CHAPTER -----	650.00	675.00
FAIR SHARE -----437 @ 50---	22,100.00	21,850.00
MISC INCOME -----	1,000.00	700.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL REVENUE -----	27,448.50	26,913.50
TOTAL AVAILABLE FUNDS -----		
EXPENSES:		
STIPENDS -----	2,450.00	2,650.00
RENT INCLUDING EQUIPMENT -----	50.00	50.00
MATERIALS & SUPPLIES -----	650.00	550.00
EDUCATION/TRAINING -----	1,000.00	1,000.00
MEETING ROOM & FACILITIES	500.00	500.00
OFFICE SUPPLIES -----	150.00	150.00
DONATIONS -----	250.00	250.00
ADMINISTRATIVE EXP -----	900.00	900.00
NEWSLETTER -----	1,707.72	1,882.41
TRAVEL EXP -----	8,998.28	9,098.59
FAIR SHARE TO NAFRA ---- 437 @ 12 -	5,304.00	5,244.00
NEWSLETTER -----	3,650.00	3,650.00
VISITATION / ELECTION -----	850.00	-
RETREAT SUBSIDY	888.50	888.50
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSE -----	100.00	100.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS -----	27,448.50	26,913.50
GAIN OR (LOSS) FOR PERIOD ---	-	-

PETER J. BEKKERS, SFO, TREASURER 03/23/11

LA VERNA REGION
SECULAR FRANCISCAN ORDER
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SHEBOYGAN, WI 53081

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Calendar of Events: Spring and Summer 2011/2012

- May 12-15 *Forming the Formatters*, NAFRA formation workshop, at The Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville, IL. For further events and updates, go to: www.nafraformation.org
- May 22 50th anniversary celebration of the founding St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity. Special Mass at 1:30 p.m., at St. Clare's Catholic Church, Wind Lake, WI, A celebration gathering immediately follows in the parish church lower level. **All are welcome.** RSVP to Laurel Swencki, SFO by phone (262) 552-7466; email: lrswencki@milwpc.com.
- May 27 "A Week of Contemplation" retreat offered by the Holy Cross Sisters of Merrill, WI. (a short drive from Wausau) Reserve whatever hours or days you can to get away for relaxation, contemplation, camaraderie, work on a spiritual journal, and enjoy God's creation on a 240-wooded acres (60 acres are lake). For further information call: Holy Cross Franciscans Sisters campus at (715) 536-4862.
- June 3-5 "Lessons from Francis," retreat presentation at Marygrove Retreat Center, 6411 State St., Garden, MI (UP) Call: (906) 644-2771 or register online at www.marygrove.org
- June 24-26 LaVerna Regional Chapter of Elections, St. Anthony Retreat Center, Marathon, WI.
- June 23-26 *Aspects of Fraternity Life*, presented by guest speakers Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap and Mary Bittner, SFO NAFRA Councilor. At St. Francis University, 117 Evergreen Dr., P.O. Box 600, Loretto, PA 15940 Phone: (814) 472-3000.
- July 3-8, **2012** *Why Francis? Claim the Gift!* The 18th Quinquennial of the Secular Franciscan Order held at the North Shore Skokie Holiday Inn, Chicago, IL