

Jottings

The AIC / MHA Alumnae Newsletter
March 2011



Alumnae board all about heart

Their 14 lives are much different now. There are mothers, grandmothers, teachers, volunteers, retirees. They are scattered geographically. But their hearts beat as one when it comes to their alma mater.

All are proud, active members of the Academy Immaculate Conception/Marian Heights Academy Alumnae Board of Directors.

And they are fiercely determined to build the connection among their beloved alumnae, and with their beloved Sisters of St. Benedict, stronger than ever.

For they share the bond of spending some very special years together on a very special hill in Ferdinand. And fully realize how it shaped their lives for the better, forever.

Tina Dalton, class of '82, said, "I might not be running a Fortune 500 company or singing on Broadway, but I am a successful person because the sisters taught us to be humane. I'm also able to stand up for myself because the Academy made me realize I have a voice.

"I always feel a connection to the sisters. Talk about some smart women and fantastic surrogate moms. They took care of us when we could be at our worst, and from all indications they actually loved doing it. I will always be grateful to them. I love reading their website and newsletters."

Sarah Tucker, class of '81, cannot imagine what her life would have been like without a relationship with the sisters.

"I arrived in Ferdinand when I was 14," she said. "It was then, and continues to be, the greatest gift my parents could have ever given me. I learned so much more than the subjects I studied. I learned about myself, about love and faith, how to live with peers who were different ethnically and culturally, and about a balance that allows me to be – mostly! – grounded."

Connie Egloff, class of 1973, is passionate about alumnae growing stronger ties among themselves and with the sisters.

"I feel the urgency in protecting our relationships and reaching out to those alumnae across the generations and all over the world to maintain a group of closely connected women," she said.



Board members pitch in to help clear the food line after the dinner at the annual reunion in June.

"We need to be those voices for each other to lift each other up when needed, and rejoice and celebrate with each other's life's joys.

"Facebook has made a huge connection. I applaud those women who are the movers and shakers in this social medium. When I go to the site, I feel a strong connection with those I've never met. It's good to share our lives this way.

"I would love to find ways to bring more alumnae back each year for Alumnae Day. I'm getting older, and conversations with those who are always in my heart are becoming priorities for me. I want to learn more about each alum while there is time."

Continued

As for the sisters, Egloff totally believes in their mission of helping those less fortunate, saying they are a “forward-thinking group of women with endless energy.” Plus, she absolutely loves the “delicious” monastery cookies.

Ruth Metzger, class of '72, said, “What a treasure our education at the Academy was, and the Benedictine way of life that continues to influence the way we live our lives. The sisters are an important influence in the Catholic Church.

“Now that I teach at a university and see the students who come to us that can't do simple math or write a coherent one-page paper, let alone think critically, I am even more grateful for my education.”

Sandy Troth, class of 1963, is typical of others who say serving on the alumnae board has been a “wonderful experience.” It has broadened her vision, and has been rewarding for her to get to know other alumnae on a personal basis.

Ann Nagy, class of '72, feels “blessed to have had the influence of the sisters in my life.”

She's a music teacher and a choir director and organist. “I realize daily the profound impact the sisters had on me during those formative years. Their influence lives on in the lives of my students through my teaching, which is largely modeled after the wonderful teachers I had at the Academy. The sisters have been life-long supports for me, and I enjoy going back to visit.”

Mary Jane Nunning, class of 1958, has a growing appreciation for what the sisters gave her during her high school years – the instilling of good morals, and the value of work, prayer, and music, which has made her “who I am today.”

“Now I want to give back to them. As a board member, I became more aware of the needs of the retired sisters who provided so much guidance during my developing years. We must preserve what we have and contribute as we can to continue this heritage.”

Nunning is part of five alumnae who host an annual benefit card party in Evansville, Indiana, for the retired sisters. The event has raised over \$11,000 in four years.

Dalton says the biggest benefit from serving on the alumnae board is “giving back to the sisters.” She has a simple reason for wanting to stay connected to the sisters.

“They rock!” she exclaims.

And she also has a special message for other alumnae.

“I have always felt sorry for graduates who cut themselves off. The four years at the Academy were the most formative of my life, and I would never give them back for anything.

“I just hope those girls who haven't been back will make it a point to visit. I never feel old when I visit. The school is closed, but we have the Academy in our heart. We don't need a building to remind us how important the sisters, the monastery, and other alumnae are to us. COME BACK AND VISIT!! BRING YOUR HEARTS BACK TO THE HILL!!”

AIC/MHA Alumnae Association Board of Directors 2011-2012

Elaine Baumgart '59

Mary Jane (Eckerle) Blessinger '63

Tina Dalton '82

Jill Ebert-Lasher '93

Connie (Holmes) Egloff '73

Lindsey (Moorman) Healy '01

Mary Jo (Boarman) Kaiser '58

Ellen (Struck) Kronfli '82

Sister Patricia McGuire '60

Ruth Metzger '72

Ann (Beckman) Nagy '72

Mary Jane (Spahn) Nunning '58

Sister Paulette Seng '59

Sandy (Schum) Troth '63

Sarah Tucker '81



Letter from the Monastery/Alumnae Liaison

I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at our Alumnae Reunion this summer. I've picked up the excitement and interest that class chairpersons or representatives have as they are making contact with classmates in their special anniversary classes (graduation years ended in "1" or "6"). When I asked several alums about serving as their class representative, I received enthusiastic responses: "I'd love to. Bring it on!" "Our class has already been making plans for the reunion." "Count me in." "We've started our reunion already on Facebook. It's great."

I suggest you connect with a friend or classmate and "head for the hill" the weekend of June 25-26. We know that visiting with Academy classmates and peers is a priority for most alums who return for the summer reunion. Usually classes have used the Saturday before the "official" Alumnae Day as their time to gather and have fun together. And sometimes to practice for their debut as a class at the reunion on Sunday. Many of us recall the appearance of the 50th anniversary class at the Sunday dinner last year — parading en masse around the dining room chanting their class song with gusto.

You'll notice that the "Alumnae News" section of *Jottings* is getting shorter each issue. Many alums now share news about themselves on Facebook, Marian Heights Academy/Academy Immaculate Conception Official Alumni Group. If you're not yet on Facebook but have access to the Internet, set up a Facebook account (free and secure) and visit the alumnae page.

In spite of cold winter weather outside, AIC/MHA Alumnae Association board members were "all fired up"

during their meeting in January when they shared their enthusiasm and excitement about working with the alumnae and the sisters. We appreciate their allowing us to share some of their thoughts and feelings in the feature article on the front page of this issue.

If you are interested in serving on the Alumnae Association board or know an alum who is, please let us know. Members are expected to attend meetings about four times a year, so distance could be a limitation. If you want to know more about what the board does, contact one of the members (see list on page 2).

Because the board will be reviewing the Association constitution this year and possibly recommending revisions concerning selection of members, the current membership on the board will remain the same for another year. The members whose terms would have expired this summer have agreed to serve at least one more year. Therefore, you won't get a ballot in this issue of *Jottings* to vote for new board members.

Finally, know that we sisters pray daily for all of you. We receive many requests for prayers from alums and post these requests on our prayer board here at the monastery and also e-mail them with other announcements twice a week to all our sisters who live and minister away from the monastery.

Stay in touch,
Sister Paulette Seng '59



Alum nationally recognized as 'outstanding Catholic administrator'

Sister Karlene Sensmeier, class of '62, received national recognition in November when she was nominated for the Distinguished Principal Award, an honor bestowed on "outstanding Catholic administrators throughout the United States" by the National Catholic Education Association.

Sister Karlene is serving in her 28th year as principal at St. Benedict School in Evansville. During the last 10 years, enrollment at the school has doubled. The superintendent of Catholic schools in the Evansville Diocese, Daryl Hagan, attributes that growth to Sister Karlene. "Her nurturing presence, high academic expectations for students, parents, faculty, and staff, and her strong faith-filled spirit have led families to choose St. Benedict as a partner in forming their children in the faith."

Michelle Priar, assistant superintendent, said, "Her creative leadership has inspired many teachers and students throughout the years. Her long-standing commitment to Catholic education has earned her the respect of students, teachers, colleagues, and the community at large."

She is seen as an outstanding educational and community leader.

In addition to her years of ministry in school administration and teaching, Sister Karlene has served as administrator for the Institute for Spirituality Leadership in Chicago, associate director of Development and coordinator of long-range planning for the Sisters of St. Benedict, and director of Kordes Center in Ferdinand.



AIC/MHA Alumnae News

The 50s

Zelma (Laverdure) Peltier '51 was elected last November to serve on the Turtle Mountain tribal council in Belcourt, North Dakota. Zelma grew up on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in Belcourt and attended school there before coming to the Academy in the late 40s. She became a teacher and taught at schools in Indiana and Colombia, South America, before returning to her native people in 1969. She married and continued working in education, mostly on the Reservation. She retired from teaching last year and hopes to bring her wisdom and experience with Native American people and their culture to her new job on the council.

The 70s

Jo-Claire Ray Corcoran '78 lives in Bluefield, Virginia, and is a regional sales manager for Diagnostic Test Group in Boca Raton, Florida.

The 80s

Elaine (Fromme) Robertson '80 "I am truly thankful to the Sisters of St. Benedict for providing me with a well-balanced Christian education. It has served me well."

Gina Fox '84 lives in Sparks, Nevada. She sent this message before Christmas. "Oh how I miss MHA. What a wonderful part of my life that was. Things are going well for me. I work for the Postal Service in Reno; we're just getting into our busy time of the year. I love it though, the faster the pace, the better. I own two horses and in my spare time, that's my life, love, passion. Hello to everyone."

Pao Pao '89 wrote, "I was at MHA just one year, and I remember all the sisters, how nice it was being there! I remember the earthquake in Mexico City and when you all helped us because we didn't know any news about our parents. Those things just can't be forgotten. I remember many nice moments at MHA with my friends and the sisters."

Betsy Jimenez '89 wrote that her classmates are in touch with each other through a page they created on Facebook. They are planning a reunion in Chicago sometime. When she was trying to type this message, she said, "It's hard to sit here and type with my 3-year-old. She's amazing and awesome, and I adore her. I also have a 15-year-old son living in Miami."

The 90s

Anna Chavez '90 (Anna sent this information in early November 2010.) "I'm an emergency medicine physician assistant for a line unit in Iraq. My end of tour is coming up and I hope to be home by Thanksgiving but nothing is certain! The Sisters and MHA have a very special place in my heart." Anna lives in Savannah, Georgia.



Interested in finding out what other alums are doing? Join the Official Alumni group on Facebook!

Search for "Marian Heights Academy/Academy Immaculate Conception Official Alumni Group"

A group of "young" Academy alums, class of 1949, pose at a gathering they had at the monastery in November. They met for a reunion because two of them, Sister Rosemary Huber, Maryknoll Sister, and Sister Mary Leah Baehl, Ferdinand Benedictine, were on home visits from their ministries. After serving in the missions for many years, Sister Rosemary is now stationed at the Maryknoll motherhouse in New York. Sister Mary Leah continues to serve in Morropon, Peru, where she has been ministering since 1977.



Academy Alumnae Reunion — June 25-26, 2011

Celebrate our Academy family reunion on the hill this summer!

ALL who attended the Academy, whether you graduated or not, are invited to the Alumnae Reunion. Those of us who share the Academy experience have a unique bond of friendship and sisterhood. The summer reunion on the hill allows us to reconnect and to strengthen those bonds, as well as make new friends. "It's more than just meeting up with our class," said board member Tina Dalton. It's a "network of Academy girls."

Representatives from special anniversary classes — graduation years ending in 1 or 6 — have been contacting their classmates and making plans for the reunion in June.

Please register for Alumnae Day by June 13. Use the form on this page or register online at thedome.org/alumnae.

Please register for Alumnae Day by June 13. Use the form on this page or register online at thedome.org/alumnae.

No, that's not a mistake but you are seeing double. We need to emphasize the importance of registering early if you want to be included in the meal count on Alumnae Day.

The Alumnae Reunion schedule is as follows:

Saturday, June 25

- No scheduled activities on campus
- Alums and classes are welcome to visit and spend time on campus

Sunday, June 26

- Check-in/registration confirmation and continental breakfast — 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. EDT in the Assembly
- Mass in the monastery church — 10:30 a.m.
- Dinner with delicious desserts made by the Alumnae board — noon in St. Gertrude Hall at the monastery
- Annual alumnae meeting and class recognitions following the dinner, drawing for art raffle winners, door prizes, and more fun
- Visiting throughout the afternoon

The \$25 fee charged for Alumnae Day helps cover the cost of the meal, set up, continental breakfast, and for the publication of *Jottings*, the alumnae newsletter. Payment may be made when you preregister or when you check in on Alumnae Day.

A big hit and a real bargain the past few years has been the silent auction held on Sunday. You can place bids for a piece of beautiful artwork (jewelry, painting, ceramic piece, glasswork, gift basket) made and contributed by Academy alums. The items will go to the highest bidders.

If you need accommodations for the weekend, check the list on page 6. There may be a few rooms (two twin beds in each) with common bathroom facilities to rent in Benet Hall, located on campus. For information and reservations, contact Anita Aders at Kordes Center, 812-367-1411, ext. 2915, or 800-880-2777.

We hope to see you in June!

And the bottom line is REGISTER FOR THE SUMMER REUNION BY JUNE 13. Use the form provided here, or register online at thedome.org/alumnae.



From right to left, Beth (Weyer) Stein '69, her sister Marc (Weyer) Hollingsworth '60, and her daughter Jannessa (Stein) Force '90 enjoy time together at the 2010 alumnae reunion.

Alumnae Reunion Registration Form

Return this form or complete the online form posted on the Academy web site by **June 13**. You may pay now or at the door, but you **must preregister if you plan to attend the dinner**. Send to:

Alumnae Association
802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, IN 47532

Or, register online at thedome.org/alumnae.

Alumnae—\$25
Adult guest for dinner—\$12
Children under 12—\$6

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Grad year _____ Phone _____

E-mail address _____

- ☐ I will be at the Sunday dinner.
☐ I will bring _____ guests for dinner.

Amount enclosed \$ _____

Indianapolis event to showcase Simply Divine cookies

If you haven't heard, there's a BIG event coming to Indianapolis in April — Indiana Artisan Marketplace— and the sisters' Simply Divine bakery is part of it. Billed as Indiana's "Premier Art & Food Experience," this event in Exposition Hall at the Indiana State Fairgrounds is organized to showcase and sell the works of designated Indiana Artisans.

Our bakery has four kinds of cookies that have been juried as Indiana Artisan products, i.e. have received the Indiana Artisan designation, which recognizes high quality art, crafts, and food products made in Indiana.

We have been invited to have a booth at the Marketplace, allowing us to get wider marketing and exposure for our cookies and to sell them to thousands of visitors who are expected to attend the event.

If you are living in or around the Indianapolis area, we invite you to stop by our booth to sample our Hildegard, buttermint, springerle, and almerle cookies. And then buy some!

Sister Jean Marie Ballard, manager of our Simply Divine monastery bakery, and other Academy staff and alumnae will be helping in the bakery booth.

You'll find more information about the Marketplace event at www.in.gov/indianaartisan/marketplace.html.



Indiana Artisan Marketplace

Indiana's Premier Art and Food Experience
Indiana State Fairgrounds • Exposition Hall

April 16–17, 2011

Need a place to stay during the reunion? Check out these local accommodations:

Harvest Moon B & B, Ferdinand	812-367-1881
Comfort Inn, Ferdinand	800-424-6423
Baymont Inn, Dale	812-937-7000
Motel 6, Dale	812-937-2294
Sleep Inn, Jasper	800-424-6423
Days Inn, Jasper	800-742-7482
Camelot Inn, Jasper	812-482-3529
Hampton Inn, Jasper	800-426-7866
Santa's Lodge, Santa Claus	812-937-1902
Quality Inn, Huntingburg	800-228-5151
Jasper Inn, Jasper	800-872-3176
Holiday Inn Express, Jasper	888-465-4329

Tina Dalton '82 has generously offered to accommodate some alums at her house in Jasper during Alumnae Reunion weekend. Contact her at tinadalton@yahoo.com for further information.

May they rest in peace

Alumnae: Mary M.(Lindauer) Carter '25, Lauretta (Welp) Bolte Verkamp '34, Ruth E. (Hassler) Ellis '41, Nadyne (Stumpf) Capone '42, Alice (Walker) McMurtry '46, Sister Amelia Banet '46, Betty Jean (Harmon) Nicheols '48, Bernice "Bee" (Hoffman) Theising '50

Husband: Eileen (Seufert) Wilmes '45, Katie (Elmer) Baker '55, Linda (Elpers) Hertel '60

Sister of: Anita (Laake) Russ '41, Sister Emily Emmert '42, Bernice (Laake) Weyer '49, Dolores (Laake) Schwinghamer '52, Yvonne (Carolyn Etienne) Evans '61

Brother of: Patricia Schnepfer '46, Sister Anna Rose Lueken '56, Sister Rosa Lee Koch '58, Martha (Koch) Render '64, Heather Connelly '87

Mother of: Evelyn (Bolte) Schwoeppe '53, Carol Sue (Reuber) Mead '60, Nancy (Greubel) Mahoney '65, Mary Catherine (Dauby) Thompson '66, Sister Agnes Marie Dauby '68, Mary (Lueken) Messmer '69, Phyllis (Lueken) Angelo '70, Sister Rosemary Dauby '70, Dorothy (Dauby) Wycoff '72, Jane (Wesensten) Lange '75, Alice J. (Wesensten) Venegas '76, Jane Ann Breen (faculty)

Father of: Kathy (Hardesty) Kochis '63, Christie Dickman '69, Dinah (Schatz) Schum '75, Susan Luegers '78, Lisette Wright '83, Lisa (McDaniel) Barrow '91, Duane Verkamp (faculty)

Faculty: Sister Mary Ruth Krack (religion teacher 1979-1980)

Our deepest thanks!

AIC/MHA Alumnae Contributions to the Sisters of St. Benedict from January 1 to December 31, 2010

We are giving a summary of alumnae contributions in a different way from past reports. The number of alumnae for whom we have up-to-date addresses is 1,646, from 73 different classes. Of that total number of alums, 362 (22%) made contributions to the Sisters of St. Benedict in 2010, totaling \$129,029.66. Former teachers/staff contributed \$4,168 last year.

Six classes had at least half of their members who donated to the sisters in 2010.

1960 had 24 out of 31	77%
1945 and 1950	61%
1953	57%
1959	54%
1935	50%

Total amounts contributed by the top five classes

1953	\$29,847.75
1969	\$12,588.00
1959	\$9,214.00
1945	\$6,670.30
1958	\$5,012.00

Twelve alums are members of the Women of the Rule group, 53 are Partners, and 42 are members of the St. Hildegard Society. (If you want to learn more about ways you can support the sisters and their ministries, go to www.thedome.org and click on "support us.")

We are truly grateful for your generous support, and we pray daily for all our alumnae.



Be a part of our dream

—Sister Barbara Lynn Schmitz



If you ask us sisters what our hopes and dreams for the future are, we would tell you our hope is that you and your loved ones, as well as the people we serve, have the opportunity to deepen your spiritual life and to grow strong in your faith. We dream of ways that we can help you and others on this spiritual journey, ways we can share our values of prayer, hospitality, peace, service, and acceptance of all people as Christ. We invite you to share in our hopes and dreams.

How can you help us? We would like you to be ambassadors for us in your local communities, churches, organizations, or other groups. We want you to help us reach people who, like many of you, are seeking to grow spiritually.

We have programs, workshops, and retreats designed to help persons on the spiritual journey — with topics such as "Holy? Me? Nourishing Our Relationship with God," "Marriage as a Process," "Staying at the Table: Being Faithful Amidst Difficulties," "Centering Prayer," and "Grieving Our Losses," to name just a few. (See thedome.org/programs) If you are able to open the doors for us to share these topics with others — whether it's speaking to groups in your parish, your local community, organization, or to a group of your friends, we would be most grateful.

As an alum, you are very much a part of our Benedictine tradition. Be a part of our dream to help others experience the hospitality, service, and prayer that is essential to our lives. If you can help or have other suggestions, let me know at barbaral@thedome.org.

As Mission Advancement director, it was my pleasure to meet with the Alumnae Board last month to share these ideas. It is my hope that together we can touch the lives of others and share the depth of spirituality God intends for all of us. Thank you for your ideas, your enthusiasm, and the countless ways you bring hope and goodness to our world. I believe wholeheartedly that together we make a difference.

Jottings

March 2011

Published twice a year for the alumnae of
Academy Immaculate Conception/
Marian Heights Academy

Sister Paulette Seng, Editor
pseng@thedome.org • 802 E. 10th Street
Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239



Jottings

AIC/MHA Alumnae Association

802 E. 10th Street • Ferdinand, Indiana 47532-9239

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ferdinand, Indiana
Permit No. 15
Zip + 4

Alumnae Day info and registration inside!

Alumna Writes Book on the Rosary

When Sister Madonna Helmer '55 celebrated her golden jubilee as a Sister of St. Benedict in 2006, she felt there was "something special I should do as I met that milestone in my life." What she ended up doing, even though she never considered herself a writer, was write a book!

The rosary has been an important part of her spiritual life since she was a child, she says. Her mother had a great love for Mary and the rosary, and she would gather the children together to pray the rosary when Sister Madonna's father, an Evansville fireman, responded to a call, as well as at other times.

And so Sister Madonna ended up writing *A Mysterious Journey: Reflections on the Mysteries of the Rosary*. In the nearly 80-page book, she offers her thoughts on the 20 joyful, luminous, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries.

She says that writing the book has been "a wonderful spiritual journey," and she invites readers to write their own reflections and see how the experience might change them.

The book, self-published by the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, is available for \$9.99 at For Heaven's Sake, the monastery gift shop, and online at www.forheavensake.org.



A Mysterious Journey



Reflections on the Mysteries of the Rosary
By Sister Madonna Helmer, OSB