



LA VERNA · SFO · REGION

LaVerna Vision

Winter 2006

Published by the LaVerna Regional Council of the Secular Franciscan Order

<http://www.rc.net/sfo/laverna/>



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Winter is waiting and promise.
Winter knows that love is coming



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The LaVerna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order in the USA consists of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. The area is divided into 4 districts: Southeast, Central, Fox Valley & UP.

LaVERNA VISION is a vehicle of communication within the LaVerna Region. It presents a forum for presenting information and insights that relate to the SFO way of life.

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LaVerna Vision is published three times a year.

The **deadlines** for submitting articles are as follows:

Spring issue-March 1
Published on April 1

Summer issue-July 1
Published on Aug. 1

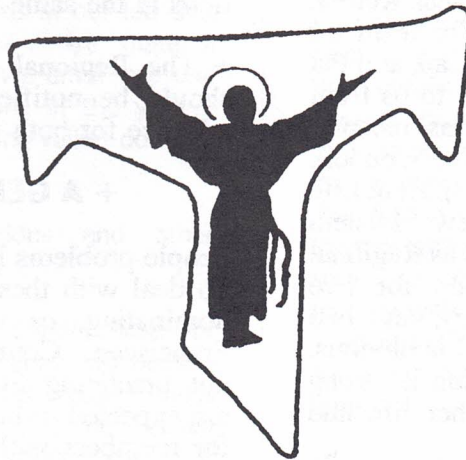
Winter issue-November 1
Published on Dec. 1

Theme.....LaVerna Region

T.....Transformation (2006)

A.....Action (2007)

U.....Unity (2008)



"My brothers, what good is it for someone to say that he has faith if his actions do not prove it?"

James 2:14

In 2006 we, as a region, concentrated on what our rule calls a "radical interior change", that is transformation or conversion.

This year we shift our emphasis to "action". Not only does our rule call us to action, it specifies where we as Seculars should concentrate our action.

Article 14 calls us to "build a more fraternal and evangelical world." Article 15 says "be in the forefront in promoting justice." "Let them esteem work" says

Article 16. Article 17 tells us to "cultivate the Franciscan spirit in our families," and Article 18 calls us to "universal kinship" with all of creation.

These calls are what prompted the development of the Commissions, which assist us in searching out ways in which we, as Seculars, can live out our Rule—to go from "gospel to life and life to gospel"

In James 2:22, we read "Faith is made perfect through action."

Is your fraternity going from gospel to life and life to gospel??

Do the discussions at your monthly gatherings culminate in some action response??

Do your actions prove that you have faith??

+REFLECTIONS+

Regional Spiritual Assistant
Lester Bach OFM Cap



+ FRANCISCAN RETREAT + APRIL 13-15, 2007

Monte Alverno
Retreat & Spirituality Center
1000 N. Ballard Rd
Appleton, WI 54911
(920) 733-8526

We invite you to attend the Franciscan Retreat to be held at Monte Alverno. The team for the retreat are Lester Bach OFM Cap, and Pat Brandwein-Ball SFO. Pat comes to us from South Berwick, Maine. She was recently elected to the National Executive Council. You may remember her from the Spirit & Life Team (SALT) presentation in New Holstein several years ago. She has served as Regional Minister of St Elizabeth Region for two terms. She and her husband, Gary, have two sons. Pat's dedication to the SFO is obvious. Her sense of the Franciscan vision is strong and finds ready expression in her life and words.

- + Cost - \$140.00 - or whatever you can give.
- + Begins - Friday evening, April 13, 2007, at 8:00 PM. There is NO supper on the 13th.
- + Please register before April 10th, 2007. Arrive at the retreat center between 6:30 & 8:00 PM.
- + Ends - Sunday - with noon lunch.

+ SURPRISE! +

I regularly get surprises from Secular Franciscans. They usually arrive with no malice or anything even near that. But from my perspective they deserve mention so we can be clear with each other.

+ Conducting a visitation and elections at the same time is not, from a regional council perspective, good news. Elections and a visitation deserve plenty of time. A pastoral and fraternal visitation needs at least a three hour period to do it well. The fraternal visitor examines important fraternity books. The visitors meet with the local council (for at least an hour or more); the pastoral visitor meets with formation personnel and, if possible, with the

people in formation. The visitors conduct an open forum with the whole fraternity as a way of helping the members to greater dedication to our way of life. The pastoral visitor meets with the spiritual assistant. cf. Statutes for Spiritual & Pastoral Assistance to the SFO - Article 14.1, .2

+ A visitation requires time that is NOT RUSHED. Local councils adjust their agendas and prayer time to meet the needs of the visitation. A visitation occurs only once every three years. It is imperative that it is as constructive as possible. Conducting elections at the same time is not possible.

+ The Regional council and Regional SA should be notified at least **six months** in advance for both visitations and elections

+ A GENTLE SPIRIT +

People problems happen in most fraternities. To deal with these people in an aggressive, dominating, or vengeful manner is NOT Franciscan. Councilors who act this way are not practicing Franciscan love. Councilors are expected to be models of loving concern for members with difficulties or who cause problems. Even as we are firm, it is NOT our way to degrade people or act and speak in ways that hurt them.

Franciscans maintain a relationship with one another in these difficult situations. A councilor who is vengeful or fails to show charity must recognize that his/her service is doing harm to the spirit of Francis that ought to be reflected by councilors. Such councilors fail in servant leadership. Change is necessary in the heart of such a councilor. We encourage them to embrace a Franciscan way of thinking and acting, i.e. with loving concern. Listen to Francis' spirit in these words to the friars:

That there is not any brother in the world who has sinned - however much he could have sinned - who, after he has looked in your eyes, would ever depart without your mercy. And if he would sin a thousand times before your eyes, love him more than me so that you may draw him to the Lord; and always be merciful with brothers such as these.

*Letter to a Minister - Francis of Assisi
Vol I - Page 97*

MINISTER'S VIEW

I received a letter from a person in formation. I found his letter of great value to all of us.

"Keep it simple." "One day at a time". These are the words he starts out with. We certainly can take that to heart. How do we keep our lives simple? Is simplicity part of our way of living? Simply put, are we living simply?

Are we holding on to items in our life that only bring complications? Are material items ruling our life? As we enter into one of the most costly seasons in the year – Christmas - is the shopping ruling our way of living?

In our Rule, Constitutions and other Franciscan sources it says:

Trusting in the Father, Christ chose for himself and his mother a poor and humble life, even though he valued created things attentively and lovingly. Let the Secular Franciscans seek a proper spirit of detachment from temporal goods by simplifying their own material needs. Let them be mindful that according to the gospel they are stewards of the goods received for the benefit of God's children. Thus, in the spirit of the Beatitudes and as pilgrims and strangers on their way to the home of the Father, they should strive to purify their hearts from every tendency and yearning for possession and power. Witnessing to the good yet to come and obliged to acquire purity of heart because of the vocation they have embraced, they should set themselves free to love God and their brothers and sisters.

Is there any way we can re-look at our wants and desires? Can we have some kind of influence in our families lives as well as our own? How can we change and do less buying of material items that we don't really need? How can we, along with our families take a clear and honest look at our values? How do we bring Franciscan Values into living simply?

An alternative to buying material items that we don't really need could be that we look in our communities and see how we can bring a bit of help into the lives of those less fortunate than ours. Is there something we can do to help bring food, clothing or some other item into their lives? Can we bring hope of a brighter day into their lives? There are so many agencies that we can tap into if we really want to bring about simple living!

In my call to become holy, I too must become like Jesus in my daily life – a life that entails my living within the secular world. The Grace of God has delivered me to your doorstep, in order that I might find the wisdom and strength that comes from the fellowship of the Franciscans. My journey with you will not result in achieving some earthly plateau or summit. My journey with you will be a lifetime of prayer – spoken when necessary – offered up to Jesus and his blessed Mother, one day at a time.

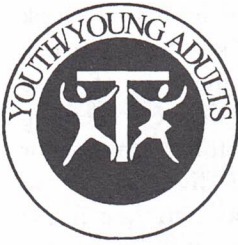
These are thoughts from one who wishes to be a follower of Jesus Christ by living the Gospels through the example of St. Francis. We are called to live "Gospel to Life – Life to Gospel". Are we really living the Gospel / Rule and setting an example to all those who look to our way of life as a way to holiness?

We pray to the Holy Spirit to guide us. May prayer lead us into "Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel". May we live our Franciscan Way of Life.

I hold you in my thoughts and prayers as we prepare for the celebration of the birth of Christ. May He enter into our hearts as a newborn child, with joy.

Ken Beattie, SFO





Youth/Young Adult Commission
Update- Jim Carlson, Chair

The H2O Project. Thirteen regions, 45 local fraternities and 1 parish youth group "Took the Challenge" offered by Franciscan Youth to bring potable drinking water to the world by moving from consumption to contribution. Of donations totaling \$7914.64, \$3,695.09 was sent to Catholic Relief Services and \$4,219.55 was sent to Living Water International.

Supporting regions/fraternities were acknowledged at the NAFRA chapter, held recently at Marathon, Wisconsin.

The Y2Q Challenge. The inside cover of the Autumn 2006 *TAU* magazine reminded us that the 17th Quinquennial is coming up July 3-8, 2007 (the registration form and agenda specifics will be in the next *TAU*). In the adjacent column appeared the NAFRA Y/YA Commission challenge that each region send one youth/young adult to the quinquennial (approximately \$450 + transportation). Anyone 16-26 with interest is eligible. This event promises to be a great educational experience for Franciscans and youth interested in the Franciscan way of life. Fraternities— **please promote the "Q" and discern interested youth/young adults.** Contact Jim Carlson, 236 S. Elizabeth St., Whitewater, WI 53190; (262/473-3130); james.carlson@wicourts.gov .

Youth Initiative-Stevens Point

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Reilly, inquirers, asked if St. Peters Fraternity had a youth ministry program of any sort where the parents and children could participate together. This led Marie Archibald, Formation Director, to form a committee to make such a ministry a reality. The first step was to have youth from the Reilly and other families lead the rosary before mass during October. After mass families were invited to hospitality downstairs and presented a free brochure "Praying the Rosary" and a handout explaining what the Franciscan Youth Apostalate is all about. **We will surely want to hear more** about this initiative from Marie and St. Peters in the future.

Remember more information about Franciscan Youth may be obtained at www.franciscanyouthusa.com/ .





Action Options

The Ecology Commission isn't just about recycling cans or tackling big issues like global warming and pollution. We as Franciscans have a special call to care for all of God's creation in a loving yet practical fashion. Here's an idea to consider. Next time you visit a friend or relative who is homebound or in a nursing home, call ahead and ask if they have any pets or bird feeders (many local nursing homes have pet cats, dogs, fish, birds and even rabbits to help cheer up the residents). If they do, ask if you can bring along a can of cat or dog food, a packet of tropical fish flakes, a pound of wild bird seed or even donate a few minutes of your time to help clean a cage or fill a bird feeder. Or, just consider saying a little prayer once a week or so, asking for special blessings for all the "little creatures" who are often the only bright spot in an ill or elderly person's day. Doing any of these suggestions won't stop wars, and won't clean up pollution or reverse global warming, but bringing joy to the elderly, ill and disabled by helping care for God's furry, finned or feathered creatures is a small gift that any one of us can offer!

Judy Stouffer, SFO

"Capturing the Spirit"

The Southeast district held its first district-wide on-going formation gathering on September 24th at St. Josephat's Parish Hall. The purpose of the gatherings is to study from the book CAPTURING THE SPIRIT OF FRANCIS AND CLARE, written by Fr. Lester Bach, OFM Cap. The SFO's who attended the first gathering came from St. Josephat, St. Paschal Baylon, St. Clare and St. Francis fraternities.

In his preface, Fr. Bach says that Franciscans have a precious opportunity in the 21st century because the Holy Spirit comes to enable us to proclaim the Gospel. St. Francis and Clare show us how it can be done.

That is where we begin our journey together with this book. All Franciscans are welcome!! Won't you please join us? For more information and date of the next gathering, please call Mary Fedor, SE District Rep. at (414) 545-3340.



*live every day like it's your last,
'cause one day you're gonna be right.*

UP Update

The Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan District has 2 active fraternities consisting of St. Anthony of Padua Fraternity with about 37 members in Marquette (spread out among 8 different parishes located in 6 different cities) and St. Francis Fraternity in Escanaba with about 15 members belonging to 3 different parishes and located in 4 different cities.

There are a total of 9 people in various stages of initial formation—3 in Marquette and 6 in Escanaba.

Mary Jane Henning was recently elected Minister at Marquette. Elections in Escanaba are planned for May.

WANTED—Editor, Laverna Vision

The Regional Fraternity would like to fill the position of Editor as soon as possible. The position requires meeting deadlines and good writing and computer skills. If you are willing and able to accept this position, please send in your resume to

Kathryn Sutliff, SFO
Secretary, Laverna Region
1015 Thayer St.
Rhineland, Wis.
54501

Fr. Ulric Buening OFM Cap.

May 13, 1927-Nov. 16, 2006



Fr. Ulric Buening died Nov. 16, 2006 in Kaukauna, Wis. Father was well known to the SFO's in the LaVerna Region as he served as Provincial Spiritual Assistant for many years and visited each fraternity in the region on an annual basis.

He was born in Fennimore, Wis. Most of his priestly life was spent working with the SFO's on local, national and international levels. Although stationed at St. Francis in Milwaukee, he spent most of his time on the road. He guided the fraternities into the vision of the lay apostolate coming from Vatican II and into a greater Franciscan identity. He was part of the process of helping SFO's develop their own leadership and mission.

Sickness brought about retirement and he lived at St. Paul Nursing Home until the time of his death.

REST IN PEACE

PLEASE REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL

If you would like to include the La Verna Region in your last will and testament, please advise your attorney to have the request read:

"I give and bequeath the sum of \$ _____ unto the LaVerna Region of the Secular Franciscan Order for the purpose of furthering the ideals of the Secular Franciscan Order."

Correspondence can be mailed to:

SFO Regional Council
C/O Ken Beattie
2951 W Bridge St.
Greenfield, Wis. 53221

LaVerna Region Hosts NAFRA and Loves It!!

This fall has been a busy one for the LaVerna Executive Council, as well as the Central District fraternities who hosted NAFRA's Chapter from Oct. 24-29th at St. Anthony's Retreat Center in Marathon. Hosting NAFRA took a lot of work, but the rewards were truly spectacular for all of us. Ken Beattie was our fearless leader who PATIENTLY explained all that it takes to host a national chapter with more than 80 people from all over the United States in attendance.

Kathy Sutliff, our secretary, truly took the lead in responding to hundreds of emails, registering everyone, contacting St. Anthony's, and dealing with countless mundane details. The registration forms asked the participants if they had any special dietary needs. One man said that he loved chocolate. Well, Kathy took the time to buy some chocolate, and she had it waiting in his room for him when he arrived. Carol Gentile (the outgoing national minister) complimented Kathy at length for all of her work that helped things to go so smoothly. While Kathy was busy registering people, Jean Platz helped register everyone for the "Day Away" that Pat Bloomquist had so admirably organized.

The Executive Council worked for months to ensure everything would go smoothly. Peter Bekkers, treasurer, was our transportation man who organized plane flights and drivers, so that every NAFRA member had a ride from the airport to St. Anthony's. You can well imagine how hard they all worked, especially when the planes were delayed

sometimes as much as three times. Peter picked up many people himself, and he now boasts that he can drive to the airport in his sleep. Peter missed most meals, and he even got up at 3 AM to take someone to the airport. Peter was a gracious ambassador who represented our region admirably. Peter's reaction to hosting NAFRA was, "I have felt so honored to be of service and do my little part to help make the NAFRA meeting so successful. I was impressed by the way the meeting and election were conducted."

As all of us know, Jim Carlson, our Fox Valley Councilor, is our favorite judge. He volunteered to be the "bell hop" of St. Anthony's. He kindly carried suitcases to the rooms of NAFRA members who were exhausted from long hours of travel. We all wondered if the people from NAFRA realized it was a judge who carried their suitcases for them. Jim's reaction to hosting NAFRA is, "Our region's hosting a National Chapter was a wonderful experience for me, confirming my profession as an SFO. Meeting the wonderful brothers and sisters first hand who run our national fraternity (here from Hawaii to Maine, from Minnesota to Texas) was a great experience."

Mary Fedor, our South East councilor, worked hard to stuff 90 some folders with the many handouts NAFRA representatives sent. As the NAFRA representatives arrived, Mary graciously gave them a warm welcome and showed them to their rooms. Mary commented, "It was a privilege to attend the NAFRA gathering as a part of the hosting region. Meeting the Secular Franciscans from around the country was very interesting.

I was able to visit with people that I read about in the TAU. Their sense of servant leadership is exceptional.”

I, Lee Ann Niebuhr, Vice Minister, helped with the Memorial Service which honored all Seculars who had died during the course of the year. The Office of the Dead was a beautiful way to honor them. I have two favorite memories about NAFRA. The first memory was from Saturday afternoon around 4 PM. NAFRA had finished electing their new officers, and all the work of the week was finished. I was setting out different munchies for the social that would be held later Saturday night. Ann Twitchel came in to visit. It was her birthday, and we decided that called for a celebratory glass of wine and a little snack. Then one-by-one others drifted in while I was setting up. It didn't take long for a little party to develop, and people who didn't know each other were able to get together and have a great impromptu birthday party for one of our Secular sisters. My second cherished memory was from the Saturday night social. Vern Reigel was playing on the keyboard. After a while when everyone seemed pretty relaxed, Vern played the “Chicken Dance.” Lots of people gathered into a circle and with much laughter did the “Chicken Dance.”

Speaking of socials, we heard comments that the socials sponsored by our region were great. Each social was well attended and each social was different from the others. Tuesday night's social was hosted by the Rhinelander Fraternity. They sponsored a wonderful wine tasting event which was a great way for everyone to mingle and relax.

The Wausau fraternity hosted Wednesday night's social. They made root beer floats and put on a humorous skit. People were chuckling for days about Don Ryder and Sister Angela's dialogue in that skit. Thursday night the group went to their “Day Away” organized by Pat Bloomquist. They stopped at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum, went to a ginseng farm and to the Van Der Geist farm. The “Day Away” concluded with a wonderful meal at an area restaurant. Both the Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids fraternities hosted the Friday night social. There was lots of food and a wonderful skit about Our Lady of Fatima put on by three young children. Everyone appreciated the acting of the children. Finally, Saturday night the social was hosted by the Woodruff Fraternity. Vern Reigel played the keyboard while people sang along to some of the songs, a few danced and others simply chatted with old and new friends.

The Marathon fraternity provided people to be at St. Anthony's throughout the entire week, so if someone needed help or needed to get something, they were there. The Marathon people certainly spent a lot of time making sure that every need was met.

I think all of us were truly amazed at how easy it was to meet and talk with our national leaders. The Holy Spirit has blessed us all with talented and compassionate officers. While NAFRA was a lot of hard work, all of us felt moved by the examples set by our leaders to become better Franciscans.

Lee Ann Niebuhr, SFO

NEWS NOTES

National Elections

At the NAFRA Chapter held at St. Anthony's Retreat Center the following were elected to serve on the National Executive Council for the next three years.

Minister—Patrick Mendes
Vice-Minister— Tom Bello
Secretary—Sarah Mulholland
Treasurer—Denis Ross
Councilor—Pat Brandwein-Ball
Councilor—Mike Carsten
Councilor—Clare McCluggage
Councilor—Anne Mulqueen
CNSA Pres.—Fr. Bart Karwacki

Quinquennial Congress-2007

The Quinquennial Congress will be held at Steubenville Ohio July 3-8, 2007. This is a wonderful opportunity that occurs only once every 5 years. Seculars from all over the USA gather to pray, to learn and to socialize. If you haven't attended a Congress before, this is your opportunity. Begin to save now. If enough folks are interested, we will plan to take a bus or van for the event. Look for more information in the next issue of TAU-USA

Transitus

Secular Franciscans gathered at Marathon, Woodruff and Appleton to celebrate the Transitus. (Passing of Francis) This celebration is held annually by Franciscans around the world to celebrate the passing of Francis to his eternal reward.



Retreats

Several Secular Franciscan retreats were held the weekend of Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 2007. At the Sienna Center Fr. Linus Kopczewski, OFM conducted a retreat for St. Paschal Baylon Fraternity. His focus was transformation. At St. Anthony's Retreat center Fr. Dan Cosby, OFM Cap. and Don Ryder SFO delved into the humility of God for seculars from the Central District.

Jubilarians

Seculars at St. Joseph Fraternity in Appleton gathered to honor their jubilarians on Sept. 17, 2006. Honored at the event were the following:

70 years-Dorothy Raiche
65 years-Rosemary Mullen
-Eunice Walter
60 years-Kathleen Bemis
55 years-Hazel Egan
-Mary Schreiter
-Midge Schweitzer
50 years-Florence Butler
-Donald Samsa
25 years-Sherry Freimuth
-Joanne VandeYacht

Stigmata of Francis

Forty-five Secular Franciscans from the SE District gathered on Sept. 16, 2006 at St. Josephat's Basilica to celebrate the feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis. Mass was con-celebrated by Fr. Patrick Stoffe OFM Conv. And Fr. Linus Kopczewski OFM. Following mass people enjoyed a brunch at the Parish Center. There are plans to make this an annual event.

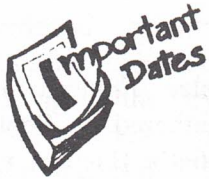


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COMING EVENTS

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Feb. 10, 2007 | Executive Council Meeting @ Green Bay |
| Mar.10, 2007 | Fox Valley District Meeting |
| Mar. 24, 2007 | SE District Meeting |
| Mar. 31, 2007 | Central-UP District Meeting |
| Apr. 13-15, 2007 | SFO Retreat , Monte Alverna Retreat Center, Appleton |
| May 5, 2007 | Executive Council Meeting @ Green Bay |
| Jun. 15-17, 2007 | Chapter Meeting & Visitation |
| Jul. 3-8, 2007 | Quinquennial Congress, Stubenville, Ohio |
| Aug. 25, 2007 | Executive Council Meeting @ Green Bay |
| (Late Sep-Oct) | SFO Retreat, Saint Anthony's Retreat Center, Marathon |
| Oct. 2-7, 2007 | National SFO Meetings |
| Oct 26-28, 2007 | Executive Council Meeting @ Marywood |