

# Franciscan Alumni Association



Established May 28th, 1989

Serving Provinces of Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. John the Baptist

[www.franciscan-alumni.org](http://www.franciscan-alumni.org)

Volume 20, Issue 1

Spring 2009

## 2009 Chapter—June 26 and 27 in Cincinnati, OH

By Dave Ball '77

Please come join us in Cincinnati for a triple celebration—the 20th year of the alumni association, the 150th anniversary of the Province of St. John the Baptist, and the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Franciscan Order.

The main events will still center around the former St. Francis Seminary grounds—the place of bun-fun, books, flying erasers, basketball, prayer and song, glee club, and the start of many great and lasting friendships.

Cincinnati is a great place to extend your stay. If you are coming for the Chapter, consider a longer stay with the family and your friends. We have included information about other activities in this letter and any members of the reunion committee will be glad to help with more. See the last page for more details.

Two other special notes about this Chapter. First, due to very generous donations by members and sponsors, the cost of the dinners and other general expenses have been covered. There will not therefore be any attendance “fee.” Donations are welcome but there is no need to feel obligated to make one so that you can attend. Second, if anyone has special needs, please let us know when you register or contact any member of the reunion committee or board and we will do our best to help.

This year, the *un*-official—and very casual—kick off will be 6:30PM, Thursday, 6/25, at the Hofbrauhaus in Newport, KY. If you are in town that night, please join us. [www.hofbrauhausnewport.com](http://www.hofbrauhausnewport.com) for info and directions. This is the usual and very popular

site of a semi-regular gathering of Cincinnati area alums. Try the pretzel sandwich with asparagus—trust me.

Friday, 6/26, we will have a tour of St. Mary’s Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption. [www.covcathedral.com](http://www.covcathedral.com) If you are interested, please indicate on the registration. For planning purposes, we expect to leave the hotel at 2:00 and begin the tour around 2:30. The tour will end in time to return to the hotel and rest before a catered dinner. No need to dress up, barbecue sauce stains.

Saturday, 6/27, we have multiple activities and you can join them all or whichever you want. Again, please indicate your preferences when registering. A tour is planned for St. Peter in

(Continued on page 2)

## Signs of the Times—Yearning with the Fire of Francis By Deacon Tommy Baca '72

The world observed an intensity of emotion and zeal during this nation’s recently held presidential election. There was fervor and a passion present, the likes of which I do not remember since I was a six year old in the first grade at Sacred Heart Cathedral Grade School in Gallup, New Mexico. I can actually remember back to 1960 when Sister Mary Katherine dazzled our young eyes with posters and buttons depicting the face of the first Catholic man to be elected president of the United States.

I can’t help but reel back to the days of the little man of Assisi who had enough fire in his belly for the world as God’s creation that he could humbly walk into the tent of a sultan to bring a message of peace. His passionate fire allowed him to boldly walk into the presence of Pope Innocent III who was likely the politically strongest of all men in history. Although I must say that in spite of such worldly power, Pope Innocent III himself had the spiritual strength to recognize the heavenly powers standing behind this little man from Assisi.

This little man had a fire deep within enkindled by a source beyond our world. This fire enabled this little disheveled wisp of a man to persuade popes and sultans while forming a center of gravity so strong that thousands of men of all walks were willing to give up what they owned to follow this simple way of life, overcome obstacles, influence, and regenerate the world in the name of Christ. Francis’ tour de force was the simple truth of knowing he was not God and knowing it was not himself who was the source of such creative fire, but rather the ever present call of Christ within the cave of his soul, in the silence and desert that the world about him did not understand.

Francis of Assisi’s fire was authentic. He knew he was no Messiah. He knew who he was in relationship to God. And yet, he burned with the same fire spawned by the Holy Spirit as it once enflamed the Apostles in the Upper Room at Pentecost. Francis’ fire was so authentic that when Pope Innocent III saw the little man walk into his view, the leader of the free world then knew immedi-

ately that this man’s fire crackled and sizzled with a kind of wood that could never be expended or extinguished by any power present in this world.

If you do not feel the intensity of heat from your fire you will not take real action beyond placing responsibility on someone else’s shoulders. The authentic flame will move you to go out and do what your pocketbook says not to do. You will be moved in spite of your poverty or your fear to the bold actions of loving kindness, to help the poor, visit the incarcerated, console the sick and the dying, and hug the lepers of our world. God places in our midst the examples of the Saints like Francis, who burned with the fire of the Holy Spirit. Read Fr. Murray Bodo’s *Francis: The Journey and Dream*. Journey with Francis of Assisi to a place deep within yourself. Journey into a cave wherein the light of hope is not so much audacious and self imposed as it is persistent, burning, real, and founded on the recognition that no man of this world can save us – we must depend upon God.

## Another Successful Reunion: The 2008 Chapter at St. Francis Seminary

By Mike Niklas '75



Approximately 120 alumni and guests participated in the big reunion in June of 2008. It began with food, drink, and socializing on Friday evening at a nearby hotel. A couple attendees to note (because we had not seen them at a Chapter in a while): Fr. David (Dismas) Turnbull and Fr. Valentine Young. Several alumni were reminded of P. Valentine's proverbs, e.g. "semper ubi sub ubi."

thony Friary on Colerain Avenue. The Archives museum is always a huge hit, with so much to see, learn, and relive. After lunch we all met at the former seminary on Mill

Butch Feldhaus '75 arranged the music for 5 PM mass. The celebrant/homilist was Fr. Gil Wohler.

After a delicious catered dinner in study hall, Bill Pellman and Fr. Pat McCloskey were honored by the Alumni Association and received the Humanitarian Award and Christian Life Award, respectively. The evening ended with a brief remembrance service and a final singing of the Ultima.



Saturday activities began with a guided tour of the St. John the Baptist Provincial Archives building, which is on the grounds of St. An-

Rd. in Cincinnati (or if you prefer *The Farm*) to stroll the grounds and reminisce with Fr. Murray Bodo and others who dropped in for awhile.



### 2009 Chapter—cont'd from Page 1

Chains Cathedral, downtown Cincinnati, [www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org](http://www.stpeterinchainscathedral.org), departing the hotel at 9:30, beginning the tour at 10:00. Lunch will follow (dutch treat) in the downtown area. Beginning at 1 PM, we will tour the Provincial Archives/museum located at St. Anthony Friary, and then head over to the former St. Francis Seminary around 3 PM.

Saturday evening events will start with mass at 5 PM in the chapel. After mass, there will be a

catered dinner, the Alumni Association Awards ceremony and socializing. Be prepared to eat, talk, eat, listen, eat, talk, return to the hotel, and talk, and talk, and.....

The reunion hotel is the Best Western Cincinnati West, Inn & Suites, 11967 Chase Plaza Dr. Cincinnati, OH 45240 513-825-9600 They are offering a special rate to our members. Call them and ask for the "FAA Reunion Rate." If you have questions, the General Manager is Arman Sahakyan. They will hold the rate of \$65 per night until one month prior

to the meeting, or 5/25. If you need to cancel later, it is subject to their normal cancellation policy of 48 hrs notice prior to arrival.

For additional hotel information and more, and most importantly to register, please visit the Alumni Association website at

**[www.franciscan-alumni.org](http://www.franciscan-alumni.org)**

The reunion committee:

Tim Lacey '77 [timlacey2@yahoo.com](mailto:timlacey2@yahoo.com)  
Joe Vormbrock '78 [jvormbrock@cinci.rr.com](mailto:jvormbrock@cinci.rr.com)  
Dave Ball '77 [david.ball@fuse.net](mailto:david.ball@fuse.net)

## St. Francis Seminary Restoration Efforts in High Gear! By Paul Landers '76 and Mike Niklas '75

About 10 years ago, the once beautiful landscape and flower gardens of St. Francis Seminary were falling into ruin. The large flower garden that previously served as a large swimming pool for students and faculty was overrun by weeds. The gazebo was deteriorating and in need of paint. The lawn in the surrounding area had not been mowed for a couple years and there were a few fallen trees as well.

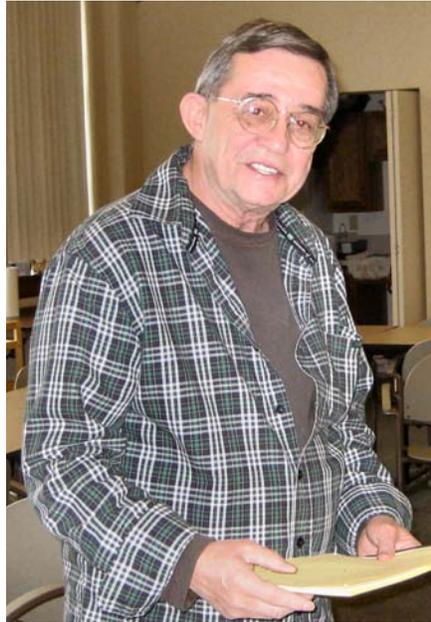
With financial assistance and "sweat equity" from many alumni, we restored some of Fr. Aubert Grieser's spectacular gardens over the course of a year, installed a watering system, added statues of St. Francis and Jesus' mother Mary, placed picnic tables in the gazebo and gave it a fresh coat of paint, etc.

In recent years, we have continued to weed the main garden now and then, but our hope was that the residents would take over the regular maintenance tasks. We had nearly given up on this notion when out of the blue we heard that a relatively new resident had formed the Mercy St. Francis Garden Club, with monthly planning sessions, active fundraising, and several projects begun or already completed!

Richard Eisele is the founder of the Mercy St. Francis Garden Club. Other members of the resident steering committee are Ruth Waltermann (treasurer), Alice Hillenbrand, Ruth Lemon (secretary), Wilma Hemsath, and Norman Noe. This is their stated purpose: "To work with management to help preserve and maintain our historical building and the surrounding campus." The large, bold text at the bottom of their advertising flyer says, "For the honor and glory of God," a motto they adopted from Fr. Aubert.

The Garden Club has raised approximately \$500 via bake sales and other fundraising efforts. They have already accomplished a great deal with their meager funds, including restoration of the gazebo's concrete floor, which had been unearthed by groundhogs. During the January 2009 meeting of the Franciscan Alumni Association, the Board approved a donation of \$1,000 to this worthy cause. Alumni board member Paul Landers '76 is our liaison to the Garden Club. He has been in contact with Richard Eisele and is enlisting alumni members to help on selected "Saturday work crews." The first of these events was 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on March 14, 2009.

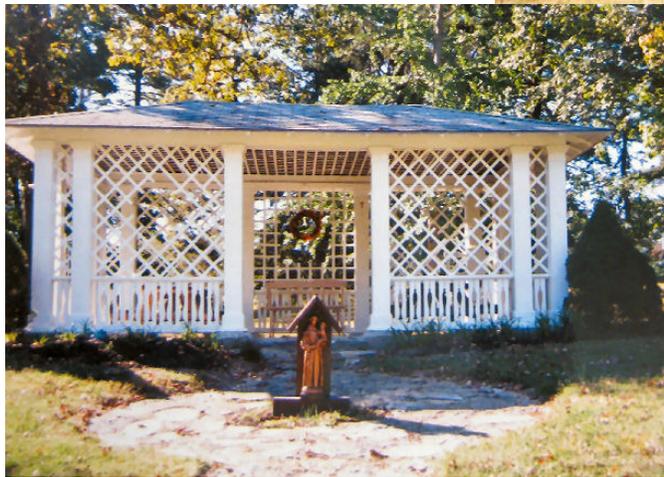
Please contact Paul ([planders@one.net](mailto:planders@one.net)) to sign up. You may also contact Paul if you wish to make a direct financial contribution.



*Richard Eisele discusses his plans with the Alumni Association Board in January '09*

This is a list of several of the Garden Club's objectives for 2009:

- *St. Francis Statue at the front door:* Clean statue and plant perennials



*Amazing restoration results — "For the honor and glory of God"*

- *Pond in front of main building:* Clean underbrush and fallen trees from the sides of the lake and install a fountain. Winton Woods' Lake Keeper says the lake is healthy but needs circulation of water
- *Front drive - south end around the pond:* This picturesque drive has been closed for years due to fallen timber
- *Rear entrance:* Add perennial and annual plants
- *Vegetable garden behind the gym:* Add lime to ready soil for planting; residents will provide plants
- *Peace Garden:* Weeding and planting
- *Grotto:* Power wash and paint; clear surrounding grounds
- *Stone bridge:* Clear access and create a nature trail to stations of the cross

We're very interested in assisting the Mercy St. Francis Garden Club to help spruce things up for the alumni reunion/Chapter, which will be held on the grounds of the former seminary on June 27—and to help restore, preserve and beautify this wonderful place that invokes fond memories for so many of us.



*As a "before" picture (above), this certainly shows that the Mercy St. Francis Garden Club is not daunted by the prospect of hard work!*

# Franciscan Alumni Association



St. Anthony Friary  
5000 Colerain Ave  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45223

[www.franciscan-alumni.org](http://www.franciscan-alumni.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Franciscan Alumni Website News

The Alumni Assn website recently moved to a new home. The address is the same but it is being hosted by a new service. This allows more control and security with less exposure to spammers. During the transition, if you encounter any problems at all, there are multiple links to the association webmaster—please let him know.

The guest book is accessed frequently. It's a great way to share information and you will definitely hear from people you could not reach otherwise. Please check it out. Anyone who enters a note about the reunion will get an email with plenty of details.

If you received this newsletter, your address is up to date in our records. But if you are planning a change or we don't have your email or other pertinent info, please access the website and use one of the links to provide the current information, or send updates to Pat Daly ([jpdaly1@gmail.com](mailto:jpdaly1@gmail.com)). Stay tuned, access the site often, and please add to the guest book. Your classmates would love to hear from you.

### Additional sites with information for the Cincinnati area and for your stay for the Chapter:

#### King's Island

[www.visitkingsisland.com](http://www.visitkingsisland.com)

#### The Beach Water Park

[www.thebeachwaterpark.com](http://www.thebeachwaterpark.com)

#### Coney Island [www.coneyislandpark.com](http://www.coneyislandpark.com)

#### Air Force Museum

[www.nationalmuseum.af.mil](http://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil)

#### Newport Aquarium

[www.newportaquarium.com](http://www.newportaquarium.com)

#### Nat. History Museum, IMAX

[www.cincymuseum.org](http://www.cincymuseum.org)

#### Gambling boats

[www.argosy.com/cincinnati](http://www.argosy.com/cincinnati),  
[www.grandvictoriacasino.hyatt.com](http://www.grandvictoriacasino.hyatt.com)

The Franciscan Alumni Association newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,200 members for whom we have addresses. The editor is Dave Ball. Other writers are identified with their articles. The only cost of production is the expense of printing and mailing. Additional stories and photos are available on the website. Thank you for your interest and support.

## The 2008-2009 Franciscan Alumni Association Board

<i>President</i>	Rick Gardner
<i>Vice President</i>	Don Weller
<i>Secretary/Website</i>	Butch Feldhaus
<i>Treasurer</i>	Charlie Bullington
<i>Provincial Liaison</i>	Gil Wohler, OFM
<i>Newsletter</i>	Dave Ball
<i>Financial Advisor</i>	Phil Zepeda
<i>Database</i>	Pat Daly
<i>Board Members:</i>	
Mario Wagner	Mike Thomas
Pat Findley	Mark Kling
Tim Lacey	Mike Niklas
William Pellman	Paul Landers