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# Franciscan Alumni Association

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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)

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## Fr. Ric Welcomes FAA Back to Bloomington!

By Rick Gardner '75

We hope to see you and many of your classmates at the **2012 Franciscan Alumni Association Reunion June 22 – 24** in Bloomington, Illinois. Bloomington was the site of our 2004 Chapter Reunion. Please join us visit with **Fr. Ric Schneider** (Pastor, St. Mary Catholic Church), **Fr. Gregg Petri**, and many alumni who will be gathering for a fun-filled, nostalgic, spiritual, Franciscan weekend.

The twin cities of Bloomington and Normal are home to Illinois State University, Illinois Wesleyan University, State Farm Insurance Company, Country Financial, Mitsubishi Motors North America, Miller Park Zoo, several golf courses, two large

hospitals, professional baseball, basketball, hockey and arena football teams, many shopping areas and restaurants and much more. More information about the area can be found online at:  
[www.bloomingtonnormalcvb.org](http://www.bloomingtonnormalcvb.org).

Bloomington and Normal are located in Central Illinois about halfway between St. Louis, Missouri and Chicago, Illinois. You can travel to Bloomington/Normal by automobile via Interstate Highways I-74, I-55 and I-39. It is about a five hour drive from Cincinnati to Bloomington on I-74. The airport in Bloomington is the Cen-

tral Illinois Regional Airport (CIRA). The website for the airport is [www.cira.com](http://www.cira.com). Another nearby airport is the Peoria International Airport in Peoria, Illinois. This airport is about 50 minutes away from our selected hotel in Bloomington via I-74. Those traveling to Bloomington from the Chicago area or the St. Louis area might consider taking the train. The twin cities are well served by Amtrak. If you prefer to travel by bus, there is a Greyhound bus station in Bloomington.

The hotel selected for the reunion is the Doubletree Hotel by Hilton. The rate for the Franciscan Alumni Association is

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## Reflections on the 2011 Chapter in Cincinnati

By Paul Landers '76  
and Mike Niklas '75

There is no question that our annual chapter is a memorable occasion, not only because of the unique individuals that make up the gathering, but because it is a celebration of the continuing process of discernment and recognition of how God touches of our lives through each other.

For most of us, this is somewhat of a retreat: An opportunity to set aside what is business and routine, to provide some breathing space and rediscover where we've been and where we're going.

Several turned out on **Thursday afternoon** at the minor seminary on Mill Road in Cincinnati to help with some grounds work. Even though we didn't have a specific plan



in place, great progress was made in the area of the **Peace Garden**. Dead trees and tractor loads of brush were removed mostly from around the crucifix at the South end of the garden. Fresh mulch was put in place on Friday morning to make a proper back-

drop for our Saturday Mass.

Special thanks to **Richard Eisele** for acting as our onsite facilities co-coordinator and arranging for delivery of mulch. The cleanup crew included **Danny Trujillo**, **Butch** and **Mary Beth Feldhaus**, and **Paul Landers**.

The 2011 reunion kicked off with a casual gathering at **Hofbrau Haus** in Newport, Kentucky on **Thursday evening**, which netted a group of 15. About half were from the regular 'Sem Night Out' crowd who welcomed the likes of **Fr. Tom Poisson**, **Br. Marcel Groth**, and **Tony Helton**. (See page 6 in this newsletter for a schedule of upcoming Sem Nights Out.)

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## Happy Anniversary!

Here are some reflections and updates from alumni who are celebrating their 40th, 50th or 60th anniversary:

### Class of 1942: Fr. Cyprian Berens

I graduated from the Farm in 1942, and with tears sang, *Goodbye, good luck, God bless you.*

My chief honor was being in charge of the grass cutting crew for a few weeks. Imagine me, age 16, telling **DePaul (Aubert) Grieser**, from U. of Illinois, where he should push his lawnmower.

I managed to stay on the good side of disciplinarian **Fr. Max Gartner**, who more than once said, "Berens, you always keep one step ahead of the sheriff."

My assignments were mostly happy: pastoral work in Illinois and Michigan, communications in Cincinnati, administration in Rome and Florence, Confessor at St. John Lateran and for the Missionaries of Charity. I couldn't persevere in one mission. However, it has been a happy life, thanks to understanding confreres and superiors. If young guys knew how happy the Franciscan life can be, our novitiate would be overflowing.

### Class of 1962: Jim Burke

Favorite teacher: **Fr. Warren** could relate to

a 14-year old, me being green and as green as you can be!

Great Classmate: Were several, but knowing **Frank Russo** since kindergarten... he was the guy.

Memories: Sunday Letter writing—I was horrible at it and still am. Thank God for spell checks and word selections today. Loved the whole experience from grand silence at night to the softball games on the weekend.

Family: Married at 20, had 5 children, now 17 grandchildren—Remarried 19 years ago, now have a 10-year old and I am (sooo) happy – and my life is complete.

Job: Many, but just retired from company after 35 years of service as Executive Vice-President. Our company manufactures and delivers all of the Kroger Brand Fresh Sausage products to the 41 states they are in.

Company name: Fresh Sausage Specialist; for those from Cincinnati, formally Edelman's.

### Class of 1962: Walt St. Clair

I left St. Leonard's in the middle of my sophomore year, January 1969. I got married in February 1970 while I was in the U.S. Army. After getting out of the Army in 1971, I struggled with finding good career employment until I was hired by the U.S. Customs Service

in May 1972. Went back to school and received my MBA from the University of Cincinnati in 1977. I worked in various capacities with Customs and retired after 30 years of total federal service in June 2000. In November 1999 I was elected as the City of St. Bernard finance director and served there for 3 terms from 2000 to 2011. My wife, Donna, and I have three children and four grandchildren. Presently I mentor a few hours at our local schools, try to get some exercise, take a night class in home repair, stay active in **St. Clement Parish** and local politics, and I can't wait for golf season to get here.

### '52 and '72

A lasting memory that I (Paul Landers) have of two anniversarians separated by 20 years and several miles: In the summer of 1973 **Fr. Berard Doerger ('52)** organized a bike trip through Michigan, Wisconsin and Ontario with 6 seminarians and alumnus **Dave Gehring ('72)**. After two weeks and over 1000 miles, boys and bikes alike were worn out and ready to get picked up along the highway. Dave and I took a little extra time at lunch one day and then couldn't locate the rest of the group ... So for the next day, we pedaled South as quickly as we could, trying to catch up... only to find that the other six were still many miles behind, pedaling at their leisure!

## Board Elections - 2012

By Butch Feldhaus '75

During this summer's reunion, eight Board member positions will be up for consideration. The persons currently holding these positions are Mike Niklas '75, Butch Feldhaus '75, Charlie Bullington '67, Mike Thomas '74, Mike Duncan '77, Paul Landers '76, Mike Demeter '78 and David Ball '77. While some of these guys wouldn't mind another term, some of them would be glad to drop off the Board for a while if someone else would like to give it a try. Are you interested? The Board meets three times a year in Cincinnati, OH, and during the reunion, wherever it is. You do not have to attend the meeting in person as we have been setting up a conference call — a tremendous savings when it comes to travel. The term of a Board member is two-years. If you would like additional information, please contact any Board member. It is totally acceptable to nominate yourself! If you nominate someone else, please be ready to provide some indication they know you are doing it and will serve if elected.

## Treasurer's 2 cents

By Charlie Bullington '67

The Franciscan Alumni Association is extremely grateful to all who reached into their pockets in response to the recent appeal. Thanks to their offerings, we have come a long way to funding our endeavors. However, funds are still needed. Your contribution, no matter how large or small will help. Donations may be forwarded to:

**Franciscan Alumni Association,  
5000 Colerain Ave., Cincinnati, Ohio 45223**

## Jubilee Year for Fr. Gil Wohler, OFM

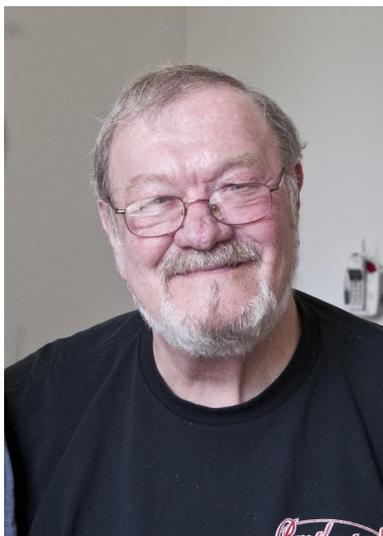
By Rick Gardner '75

Father Gil Wohler, OFM will have been a Franciscan priest for 50 years in June this year. He was ordained June 14, 1962 at St. Leonard College.

Some of you may remember Fr. Gil as a classmate or schoolmate at St. Francis Seminary in the early 1950's. You may remember him from classes, study hall or work periods. You may remember him as quarterback of the football team!

Some of you may have been students of his after his ordination when he was teaching at the seminary. You may have been in one of his Sociology, Civics, or History classes. Or you may remember him as your basketball coach or as your Spiritual Director.

But, however you remember Gil, I'm willing to bet that you remember him, at least, as "A heck of a nice guy!" This is how he has described other good people to me.



Fr. Gil Wohler

Unfortunately, I wasn't one of Gil's students when I was at St. Francis Seminary... he might have been at Roger Bacon High School or in Africa at that time. In recent years, I've known Fr. Gil from being on the Franciscan Alumni Association Board of Directors with him. He is truly one of the kindest and most caring persons I've ever met. He's humble, honest, attentive, and dedicated. These words can't begin to do him justice. I'm sure that St. Francis is quite proud of him!

Fr. Gil is very dedicated and very enthusiastic about the Franciscan Alumni Association. He is our current liaison with the St. John the Baptist Province. Gil is so passionate about the FAA that he is determined to attend this year's reunion in Bloomington, Illinois. I know that he is also looking forward to visiting with his dear friend, Fr. Ric Schneider, OFM.

## The Rachel Statue

By Julia Miller

The Saturday evening dinner at our 2012 Chapter Reunion was prepared and served by the Knights of Columbus of St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Liberty Township, OH, which counts Paul Landers ('76) and Deacon Mike Lippman ('76) among its members. As a gesture of appreciation to the Knights, the Franciscan Alumni Association donated \$300 toward their campaign to purchase a statue of "Rachel Weeping for Her Children."

On Right to Life Weekend (Oct. 1, 2011), the official ceremony was held to dedicate the statue to the unborn lost to abortion and to all those who mourn the loss of a child.

The bronze limited edition (#9 of 12) sculpture was designed by Sondra L. Jonson of Nebraska. It sits on a 3,600 pound red granite stone which was found on a farm in Ross County, probably pushed down to southern Ohio by the Great Glacier which formed the hills of southern Ohio.

Artist Jonson says that she designed the statue "to reflect a society bereaved of its

children and looking to God for healing and redemption" and placed a rose at Ra-



chel's side as a "sign of her confidence in God and hope for her future."

The story of Rachel and Jacob and their

family are found in the Book of Genesis, and Jeremiah 31:15, 16 tells of Rachel's weeping for her children who have gone into exile. Matthew quotes Jeremiah when Mary and Joseph escape Bethlehem when the Innocents (boys under two years old) are being slaughtered by Herod in his attempt to kill Jesus (Matthew 2:18). Jacob's children are often referred to as the founders of the 12 tribes of Israel (another name for Jacob).

Rachel was an Old Testament matriarch, the wife of Jacob for whom he worked many years for the honor of marrying. She was the mother of Joseph (of the coat of many colors) and Benjamin. She longed for children and died in Benjamin's childbirth. She was buried outside Bethlehem; her tomb is visited by Jews, Muslims, and Christians alike. Project Rachel and Priests for Life have chosen her to represent their efforts to promote life. It is the Knights' wish that this statue will inspire those who contemplate abortion to choose life and to help those in need of consolation and healing to find hope.

# 2011 Franciscan Alumni Chapter Plan

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\$89 per night plus taxes. This includes a full breakfast and other amenities. You can find out more about the hotel online at: <http://Bloomington.Doubletree.com>.

The telephone number for reservations is: (309) 664-6446. Remember to ask for the Franciscan Alumni Association room rate. Reservations must be made before May 31 to get the FAA discount.

If you are not staying at the Doubletree Hotel, but would like to have breakfast with other alumni at the hotel, you can do so. You may pay \$9.95 for breakfast at the hotel's front desk. If you are planning to do this, please contact the reunion organizing committee.

## Reunion activities and events

Following is a list of events and activities that are planned for the reunion. Please note that events and activities are tentative and subject to change. As of this writing, we anticipate we will only ask for an honor donation at all scheduled meals, except that alumni will be responsible for their own food and drink expenses on Thursday evening.

A meeting room is reserved at the hotel each day for morning prayer. Butch Feldhaus '75 will lead us in prayer.

## Thursday, June 21, 2012

Alumni who arrive early on Thursday can get together in the evening at a local establishment for dinner and drinks. We are tentatively planning on dining at Rosie's Pub and Restaurant in downtown Bloomington. We will offer a short walking tour of downtown Bloomington after dinner.

## Friday, June 22, 2012

Friday is the official start to the reunion. It will begin with Morning Prayer in the Doubletree Hotel meeting room Ironwood A/B for alumni who arrived the day before. Morning Prayer will be at 7:45 with breakfast around 8:00.

Lunch at Fiesta Ranchera restaurant.

In the evening, join your fellow alumni at a pizza reception with an open bar in the Doubletree Hotel Brookridge meeting room. The pizzas will be prepared by the Doubletree Hotel. This event will be between 5 and 11pm. The exact time is yet to be determined.

## Saturday, June 23, 2012

We will start the day with Morning Prayer in the Doubletree Hotel meeting room Ironwood A/B at 7:45, followed by breakfast at 8:00.

We will have a picnic lunch at Clover Lawn. Clover Lawn was the name David Davis gave his estate on the east side of Bloomington. He was a close personal friend of Abraham Lincoln. His home is now the historic David Davis Mansion. Take a guided tour of the mansion after lunch.

In the afternoon, you can head over to St. Mary's Church and tour the school, church and friary before Mass.

Mass will be St. Mary's Church at 4 o'clock with other members of the parish's faith congregation. Fr. Ric Schneider, OFM will be the main celebrant for the Mass.

Dinner will be in the Doubletree Hotel Brookridge meeting room at approximately 6 pm.

The chapter will close with a remem-

brance ceremony and singing of the Ultima.

## Attendance Notification

At this writing our attendance list includes classes from 1950 to 1980 and latitudes from **Florida** to **Michigan**. Please contact the FAA 2012 reunion committee with notification of your intent to attend the reunion, with how many will be at the events and activities, and especially meals. Contact us in any of the following ways:

...via the 2012 reunion web page on our website: [www.franciscan-alumni.org](http://www.franciscan-alumni.org).

...via email to:

[2012Reunion@franciscan-alumni.org](mailto:2012Reunion@franciscan-alumni.org).

...via mail to:

Franciscan Alumni Association  
5000 Colerain Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45223

... by contacting Rick Gardner directly:

H: (309) 662-9691  
C: (309) 825-6466

... by contacting Dennis Kirby:

H: (309) 661-0256  
C: (309) 824-2795

## Contact Information

**Doubletree Hotel Bloomington**  
**10 Brickyard Dr**  
**Bloomington, IL 61701**  
**(309) 664-6446**

<http://Bloomington.Doubletree.com>



## Reflections on the 2011 Chapter in Cincinnati

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Thursday evenings are usually pretty busy at the Hofbrau Haus, but in fair weather, as this was, the crowd expands into the outdoor dining area where there's a little more room to spread out and conversation takes precedence over the band.

**Friday evening's social** at a local hotel's party room drew a comfortable gathering of about 30 alumni and spouses. The informal setting allowed for some to just drop in, others to play cards, to prepare music for Saturday's Mass, or just to catch up with others.



*Lacey, Daley, Duncan & Ball*

Our sincere appreciation to **Ron Cooper** who hosted an alumni tour group at the **Franciscan Archives at St. Anthony Friary on Saturday morning**. The volume of history and artifacts is overwhelming, so we resigned to satisfy ourselves with a sampling of the lives and writings of our Franciscan brothers.

Many alumni arrived early at the former St. Francis Seminary early in the afternoon to stroll the campus, make new acquaintances, and track down old friends.

Small groups could be found lounging by the veranda or gazebo, checking out the residents' vegetable garden and new developments, or carting chairs from the old locker room down to the Peace Garden in preparation for Mass.

In mid afternoon, **Don Weller** rallied most of the alumni who were present to gather in Study Hall and sing for a recording of the Ultima. After a bit of practice, where each of us discovered which high or low notes we can no longer reach, the group recorded two uninterrupted takes of our beloved, prayerful anthem. **Mike Niklas** directed the impromptu "Glee Club" and mixed the stereo recording for **Butch Feldhaus** to make available to all on the Franciscan Alumni Assn website.

**Fr. Tom Poisson** and **Fr. Murray Bodo** concelebrated Mass in the Peace Garden at 5 pm. The ground dried out just enough that we had no problem setting up chairs in the grass. The chairs for the congregation were angled so that the late afternoon sun was at our backs. This was the main event: Joined by many of the Mercy Franciscan residents, we physically celebrated together our continuing spiritual communion with Christ and each other.

Be sure to enjoy the substantial collection of pictures and videos on our website offered by our photographers **Dave Imhoff**, **Don Weller** and **Fr. Frank Jasper**.

**Dinner** was pulled pork & pulled chicken on rolls from the North College Hill Bakery, with cole slaw, green beans, potato salad, and the best part— plenty of won-

derful desserts provided by the Mercy Franciscan residents. Thanks to **Paul Landers**, **Tom** and **Connie Landers**, and the **Knights of St. Max Church** for preparing and serving the splendid dinner.

The air in the old Study Hall was lively and loud as conversations and laughter continued throughout the meal.

After dinner and the requisite introductions/brief business meeting, Fr. Murray reminisced about his life as an author and then signed books for many attendees who formed a line in the back of the room. As each 'customer' took the opportunity to sit down with Murray, who served for a time as spiritual advisor to students at the Seminary, the only thing that was missing was the 'traffic light' that was outside the Friar's office, indicating his availability for a meeting. Murray continues to encourage and guide many through his writings.

It was a fortuitous that Murray's newest publication, **Francis, the Journey and the Dream: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition**, became available just days before this event. These special editions sold out quickly!

Thanks to **Cindy Cokl** of the St. Anthony Messenger Press for making the books available.

We ended our formalities with a remembrance service conducted by Ralph Hatke and Dennis Kirby. **Requiescat in pace:**

Rev. Duane Stenzel, OFM ('45)  
Rev. Joseph Rayes, OFM ('48)  
Rev. John Mittelstadt, OFM ('53)  
Rev. Nicholas Lohkamp, OFM ('43)  
Rev. Justus Wirth, OFM ('53)  
Rev. Aquinas Schneider, OFM ('45)  
Barry McGlynn ('52)  
Diego D. Esquibel ('68)  
William John Halsmer ('63)\*  
William James O'Neill, PH.D ('57)  
Mary Schroeder (St. Francis Bookshop)

## Franciscan Alumni Association

St. Anthony Friary  
5000 Colerain Ave.  
Cincinnati, OH 45223

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

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### Seminary Night Out

*Tim Lacey '77*

Tim and the rest of the gang continue to rally guys from the Greater Cincinnati area to come together on a regular basis to reminisce and catch up over dinner and drinks. It's always a real treat to have out-of-towners drop in! We generally gather around 5:30 PM. Planned dates for the 'Sem Night Out' over the next few months are:

Thursday **June 14**, 2012  
**Hofbrau Haus**  
200 E. 3rd Street  
Newport, Kentucky 41071  
859-491-7200

Thursday **August 23**, 2012  
**Buffalo Wild Wings**  
9243 Schulze Drive  
West Chester, Ohio 45069  
513-942-9464

Thursday **October 25**, 2012  
**Hofbrau Haus**  
200 E. 3rd Street  
Newport, Kentucky 41071  
859-491-7200

Thursday **December 27**, 2012  
**Smokey Bones BBQ**  
9484 Civic Center Blvd.  
West Chester, Ohio 45242  
513-777-5360

The Franciscan Alumni Association newsletter is mailed to approximately 1,200 members for whom we have addresses. 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 2010-2011 Franciscan Alumni Association Board

<i>President</i>	Paul Landers
<i>Vice President</i>	Rick Gardner
<i>Secretary/Website</i>	Butch Feldhaus
<i>Treasurer, Archivist, Awards</i>	Charles Bullington
<i>Provincial Liaison</i>	Rev. Gil Wohler, OFM
<i>Newsletter</i>	Dave Ball
<i>Financial Advisor</i>	Phil Zepeda
<i>Database</i>	Paul Landers
<i>Members-at-Large</i>	
Raul Martinez	Mike Niklas
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