

# Perspectives

A Publication of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

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Meet the women who are called today

## In this issue:

*Novices journey toward final vows*

*2013 Jubilarians*

*Sister reflects on becoming FSPA*



*"Lord, I am called to persevere in my calling. I ponder the ways in which you modeled a life of integrity, compassion and self-giving love. Help me to remember that we are blessed by the same source of loving energy and creative potential. I pray that I will allow your grace to empower me and your wisdom to direct my actions. May I be fed in this time of prayer and, by living with joy and gratitude, share what I'm given. Amen."*

- Marcia Baumert, FSPA  
*Eucharistic Adoration: Reflections in the Franciscan Tradition*

"... to persevere in my calling." These words of prayer, written by Sister Marcia, called us to devote this issue of *Perspectives* magazine to the call to religious life and what it looks like in the 21st century.

*Called to consider:* Inside, you'll read how one sister's desire to volunteer with FSPA-sponsored Global Awareness Through Experience actually led her down the path to professing vows. For Sister Linda, her time in Mexico with two FSPA deepened her call and allowed her to ask, "could this be it?" (pg. 10).

*Called to explore and be companion:* The journey to becoming a Catholic sister begins in discernment. For the serious discernor, she is led to a congregation. In this issue, you'll learn more about the FSPA novitiate phase—two of the nine-year journey to becoming FSPA (pg. 3). You're also invited to read personal letters written and exchanged by two FSPA who traveled together for nine years, one as a companion sister and the other a discerning sister, and now share an eternal bond (pg. 4).

*Called to live Franciscan values:* Together with our partners in ministry, FSPA affiliates and prayer partners, we're constantly seeking opportunities to deepen our prayer lives and respond to the needs of society. In this issue, Sister Lucy offers her perspective on sharing in the lives of the lay men and women who have committed to living a Franciscan lifestyle and who formally affiliate with FSPA (pg. 8). And, you'll hear from an affiliate whose commitment deepened after a service trip to Cameroon, Africa (pg. 9).

*Called to share:* Several FSPA, now living at St. Rose Convent, are called to share our story. Our tour guides (pg. 6), tell the story of our chapel to more than 5,000 visitors per year. They share the rich history of that sacred space and invite guests to pause for a moment in the Adoration Chapel, where on Aug. 1, 2013, we will celebrate 135 years of non-stop prayer.

Enjoy this issue. Share it with someone who might be called.



*In August, FSPA celebrates 135 years of perpetual adoration. The sacred tradition began Aug. 1, 1873, and continues today as the nation's longest running non-stop prayer.*

Photo by Bruce Defries

**Perspectives represents the spirit and values shared by the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.**

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Sister Eileen Lang  
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*Cover photo: Sisters Corrina Thomas and Sue Ernster are two of five sisters featured in our video series, [fspa.org/called](http://fspa.org/called).*



# Novitiate journey

## Novices reflect, prepare for vows

**F**ranciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration Laurie Sullivan and Michelle Frazier have embarked on a voyage to affirm their devotions to religious life: a nine-year journey to the altar in La Crosse, Wisconsin's Mary of the Angels Chapel where sisters make their perpetual profession to God and their community. Right now they're traversing the channel known as the novitiate phase—a two-year rite of passage for discovery, discernment, preparation and incorporation that will further mark the maps of their missions as two women, Franciscan novices, traveling today.

*Perspectives:* The program is split into two tracks: each sister spends one year as a canonical novice and one as an apostolic novice. For nine months, a canonical novice attends an immersion study program with other Third Order Regular Franciscan Common Novices (TOR FCN) to study Franciscanism; religious life; the contemporary church; community; vows of poverty, consecrated celibacy and obedience; and the history, customs and traditions of her own congregation. Apostolic novices, among other facets of the phase, engage

in ministry, take part in cross-cultural experiences, live in community and participate in processes for integration.

Tell us where you are this year, and what part of your path has engaged and inspired you the most so far.

*Sister Laurie:* I'm a canonical novice. My volunteer ministry, at St. Anthony's Food and Clothing Pantry in St. Louis, Mo., has touched my heart and soul in a very deep and personal way. I've been gifted to encounter the face of God there in the patrons and the other volunteers.

I'm not afraid to work hard or even get dirty if I believe it makes another's life a bit better.

A particular class from my nine-month TOR FCN studies, The History of Religious Life in the U.S., really engaged me ... giving me insight to the great influence and work women religious have done throughout history. In giving a presentation on my community's history the information I shared, deepened my love for and my identity as a FSPA.

*Sister Michelle:* This year I'm experiencing the apostolic novitiate phase. My friendship with my companion sister Jean Moore, FSPA, has really been a gift and a blessing and has helped me through times when I've struggled and not struggled. Her mentorship is teaching me how to live religious life.

Currently I work in La Crosse at Viterbo University's Academic Resource Center as a tutor, supporting the teachings of the Franciscan tradition.

My cross-cultural experiences began



*Sister Laurie Sullivan, left, with Sister Joanne Schatzlein, OSF, one of the presenters of Franciscan Sources at TOR FCN.*

Photo courtesy of Laurie Sullivan, FSPA

last year when I traveled to Guatemala as an associate. Living now in La Crosse as a novice, helping college students here, I've found so many differences, especially in socio-economics. It's taught me that regardless of status we all have our limitations and we all need help. It's also taught me to be open to everyone and let go of some of my own stereotypes.

*Perspectives:* Residing in community is an element of transition that many lay people may not fully consider. What are you finding in your new living environment with other sisters?

*Sister Michelle:* I live in Chiara House, the FSPA formation house, with four other women and really like it. It's very personal ... learning how to live with women whom I didn't know two years ago. I'm also learning how to live in an authentic and loving way ... a lesson that goes on until we die.

Continued on page 5



*From left, Sisters Karen Neuser, Laurie Sullivan, Michelle Frazier and Jean Moore celebrate together, as companion sisters and novices, the joy of incorporation relationships.*





# Companion journey

## Dear companion sister ...

**T**raveling, especially on a trip that could change the course of one's life forever, feels safer with a companion who has crossed the same bridges before you. To your questions she counsels you. Through your confusion she consoles you. In your discernment she supports you. With her presence she inspires you.

For the women in process to become a FSPA, a companion sister is someone to walk with through every stage. And when the discerning sister reaches her final destination—her vow ceremony—the bond they have formed is lifelong.

Two Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, Joan Hageman and Eileen McKenzie, journeyed hand in hand together through Sister Eileen's nine-year formation program. Recently, they expressed to each other the spirit of their companionship as it was then and still is today.

Dear Sister Eileen,

Tonight I am writing to tell you how grateful I am for having been your companion on your novitiate journey—part of your nine years to take final vows with FSPA. I was surprised and humbled when you asked me to go with you, and our special trip together is still meaningful to me for the bond we made—still so precious. I know I see you so seldom nowadays but when something big happens we reach out to each other, and I thank you for our continued connection.

Sister Eileen, you are a profoundly prayerful person and I have no doubt it will ever change. I'm happy to see your life has been so blessed by God with joys and good works—like holistic healing through community acupuncture and social justice reform with AMOS—that fulfill you. I've always

appreciated the depths of God's love for you and your outlook even when things were difficult in your life. You have a way of talking some of that out and then moving on. It's also a joy to see you in the Adoration Chapel, asking God for your needs and being grateful for everything that comes your way.

Our time together during meals we ate and conversations we shared was nourishing, meaningful, enlivening and fun. Our retreat together at Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center was one of those precious experiences. Going to visit my relatives gave us memorable times together, too. Meeting your parents and family was also meaningful for me—meaningful to see where you spent your childhood and to get a sense of your roots.

Thank you for our strong relationship, Sister Eileen. My love for you is constant.  
Sister Joan

Dear Sister Joan,

Do you remember when I was a FSPA associate and experiencing my first Wisconsin spring? You were the driver of a car full of sisters venturing out in the warm April sunshine for a Sunday drive and picnic. Who would have thought that a little wind and a couple of hours would plunge the temperatures down 30 degrees? The April chill was not going to deter you from the first picnic of the season though—you just grabbed your parka out from the trunk and offered all of us blankets to wrap around ourselves. We sat around



*Sisters Eileen McKenzie, left, and Joan Hageman are happy to share time together whenever they can. Photo courtesy of Eileen McKenzie, FSPA*

a picnic table eating egg salad sandwiches, wondering if snow would fall before we reached home. Your laughter, playfulness and joy that day are deeply seeded in my memory.

Some months later, when I was asked who I would choose to be a companion sister during my FSPA formation, I remembered your carefree approach to those unforeseen circumstances and the decision was made. What a blessing God gave me!

The 14 years we have accompanied each other have been full of grace, haven't they? I reflect on how you listened to me when I didn't understand certain aspects in religious life and how you prayed for me through that confusion. I feel grateful in how we've shared our faith and our doubts and the blessings God has given each of us in our relationship. And what fun we've had in sharing our families with each other! From Iowa to Vermont I'm afraid we will never be the same—nor will our families, for that matter!

Sister Joan, you have taught me—no, you have *shown* me—what loving presence looks like. For this, I am eternally grateful.

Peace and Love,  
Sister Eileen ■



## Novitiate

continued from page 3

*Sister Laurie:* It calls forth the best in me while also challenging me in relationship building and facing the shadow side of myself ... those things I need to work on or integrate in order to be in loving, life-giving relationships with all and the things that keep me from giving my best self to God and God's people.

*Perspectives:* So far, have you had an experience that's grasped your shoulders and confirmed your call to FSPA?

*Sister Laurie:* Interacting with novices from other communities truly affirms why I'm called to FSPA. There is a beauty and uniqueness to each community's spirit and it's in the FSPA spirit and its sisters themselves that I've found a

great richness and passion in line with how I feel God is calling me. I believe the experience has made me fall more in love with the FSPA and what their mission is about.

*Sister Michelle:* I haven't had one big event. It's the little things that tell me this is where I need to be. It's been in



Francis of Assisi and His Word, by Mark Galli, is one of the books from which Sister Michelle Frazier tutors Patrick, a freshman at Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wis. "I like working with Sister Michelle because she's patient with me. She also goes beyond the text," he says, "trying to relate the subjects to sports, which I like."

the relationships I've built, the love and acceptance here, the deep peace that I have in knowing that this is the lifestyle I want to live. And it's in the ups and downs of everyday living that make commitment to FSPA real for me.

*Perspectives:* How do you see yourself serving as a FSPA, in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare, once you've made final vows?

*Sister Michelle:* My goal is to become a reading specialist and work with adults, but really I'll be living out that Franciscan spirit by meeting need in community.

*Sister Laurie:* I haven't looked that far ahead. I'm fully appreciating, enjoying and receiving the gifts of where I am now. I'm growing into a great lesson that [Incorporation Co-minister] Karen Lueck, FSPA, has taught me: stay in the present moment! ■

## 2013 Jubilarians

### Diamond (75 years) 1938

#### Sisters

Rose Rita Collingon  
Cathryn Meyer

### Diamond (70 years) 1943

#### Sisters

Ardelle DeClerck  
Bernyne Stark

### Diamond (60 years) 1953

#### Sisters

Joyce Bantle  
Helen Gastner  
Florence Griesmer  
Elissa Kamaka  
Bernadette Nehl  
Agnes Schweiger  
Mildred Tigges  
Mary Simeon Werner  
Agnes Wernimont  
Laverne Wilichowski

### Golden (50 years) 1963

#### Sisters

Helen Deppe  
Ronalda Hophan  
Karen Kappell  
Patricia Shepler

#### Affiliate

### Silver (25 years) 1988

John Maule  
Anne Schulteis





# La Crosse, Wisconsin



## Chapel tours showcase beauty, history and love of prayer

by **Kim Seidel**

To share their majestic Mary of the Angels Chapel and their deep love of prayer and the Eucharist, Franciscan Sisters and affiliates give daily tours at St. Rose Convent in La Crosse, Wis. Through their gift of hospitality, about 10 sisters and several affiliates, led by Mildred Tigges, FSPA, offer chapel tours.

Since 1980 when the tours began, nearly 60,000 people of all ages and faiths have experienced the grandeur of the stunning chapel. “The tours enable people to go into their inner core. Many people say how quiet and peaceful it is,” Sister Mildred says. “Many visitors will come out of the chapel with tears rolling down their faces.”

From 2002 (the year Lydia Wendl, FSPA, started to track tourist numbers) to 2012 figures nearly doubled: from 3,000 to 5,500 annual visitors. People from almost all 50 states and 30 countries have experienced the chapel.

Sharing the FSPA story is an important part of the tours, which begin with a 12-minute video to give visitors insight into the vital role FSPA's history played in the miraculous chapel construction. “We hope people will appreciate its beauty and peace,” Sister Mildred says.

A promise by one of FSPA's founders, Mother Antonia, was the foundation for bringing the chapel into reality. In 1849, six lay women, two priests and several brothers came from Ettenbeuren, Germany, to Milwaukee, Wis. They desired to live in the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi and to minister and teach German immigrants.

FSPA's devotion to St. Francis, along with their German heritage, is not lost in the chapel. It was named Maria Angelorum—Mary of the Angels—after St. Francis' first chapel. Tourists gaze in awe at bright windows of Bavarian stained

glass, furnished by the Royal Bavarian Art Institute of Munich, Germany. Guides also share little-known, amazing facts, such as no two faces are the same on any of the 100 stained-glass windows.

After 15 years, Mother Antonia and five companions moved to Jefferson, Wis., where they faced greater difficulties. They prayed a novena to St. Joseph from March 9 to 19, 1865. With no sanctuary light, Mother Antonia helped prepare a lard light, lit it and promised that if God helped and blessed their community, the sisters would establish perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and build as beautiful a chapel as means would allow.

“When I think of the promise, I get goose bumps,” Sister Mildred says. “It's our heritage and a gift meant to be shared. The more you share, the more the Lord blesses.”

The sisters moved to the newly founded La Crosse Diocese on July 10, 1871. Poor and hard working, they built the convent and began to teach. On Aug. 1, 1878, at 11 a.m., 13 years after the promise, the first adoration hour began, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This adoration remains unbroken in its 135 years.

Following Mother Antonia's death in 1882, Sister Ludovica, elected Mother Superior, realized the promise's second half—to build a chapel—had not been fulfilled and set out to work on it.

While on a tour, it's amazing to consider that the large chapel with its astounding architecture, altars, sculptures and paintings took four years to complete, from April 1902 to August 1906. “Nothing is too good for the Lord,” Sister Mildred says. “That's what this is—all for the glory of God. We scrimped and saved for it. It's pure gift to us members of FSPA.”

A plaque with the inscribed promise hangs above the lard light in the vestry, as visitors enter through red oak doors and view rows of hand-carved red oak pews, built from area timber. As visitors walk half-way down the main aisle, Sister Mildred enjoys telling them they just walked under 10 angels. Looking up, they take in the marvelous painting of angels on the ceiling. A total of 160 awe-inspiring angels are featured throughout the chapel—on windows, carvings and statues.

Spectacular columns and pillars resemble Norwegian



*Sister Karen Flottmeier leads a tour in Mary of the Angels Chapel.*



marble but are actually made from 19 different painting processes, making it impossible to repeat. It's just one way visitors learn the chapel is exquisitely unique. No duplicates exist of the 10 bronzed statues in and around the sanctuary, including Saints Peter and Paul. Many such features were created specifically for the chapel.



*This photo overlooks the Adoration Chapel altar, where our tradition of perpetual adoration continues today.*

Photo by Bruce Defries

The very heart of the chapel—and of FSPA itself—is the Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Its tranquility and elegance provide a slice of heaven to those who come to pray in front of the Blessed Sacrament. The lovely surrounding windows portray the nine angelic choirs and their queen, Mary of the Angels, in the center window watching gracefully over all who pray around the clock.

Tours are available 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m., Monday-Saturday; and 1-3 p.m., Sunday. Groups of 20 or more are asked to call ahead for an appointment, 608-782-5610. Please plan 45 to 60 minutes per tour. ■



*FSPA and affiliates who offer their time as chapel tour guides are (standing, left to right) Sisters Marlene Weber, Margaret Wagner, Mildred Tigges; affiliate Marilyn Hempstead; Sisters Bernyne Stark, Fran Browning, Clarone Brill and Mary Boniface Kriener. Seated (left to right) are Sisters Lydia Wendl and Malinda Gerke. Pictured on page 6 is Sister Karen Flottmeier.*

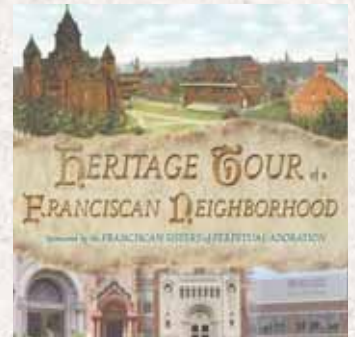
## Walking Tours

by Kim Seidel

Taking a walking tour of the eight city blocks surrounding Mary of the Angels Chapel in St. Rose Convent can enhance visitors' appreciation for FSPA's service and history.

"The campus manifests the historic and continuing service mission of this dedicated order of Franciscan women religious," says Ladonna Kassmeyer, FSPA. "This historic architectural district displays a well-preserved architectural legacy of the late 19th and early 20th centuries in La Crosse."

Sister Ladonna was among those FSPA who created the Heritage Tour of a Franciscan Neighborhood. Formal walking tours began in conjunction with FSPA's centennial celebration in 2006.



The beautiful buildings offer a portrait of FSPA's important accomplishments for the city and region. The buildings preserve the community's German culture and traditions through stunning architecture that ties each of the 14 sites together on campus. The Romanesque Revival style of the chapel echoes elements of classical Roman architecture. It's repeated in decorative elements on many of the buildings located on the Franciscan campus.

The distinctive architectural legacy of the FSPA now spans over a century, from the local landmark Romanesque Revival Maria Angelorum Chapel (1906) to the continuation of architectural motifs and ornamentation of the early modern period in the D.B. Reinhart Center for Ethics and Technology (2003) and the Surgery and Cancer Center (2004).

Individuals may obtain a brochure that provides a suggested route for viewing the gorgeous buildings on the heritage tour. Architectural gems and sculptures are highlighted as well. To request a brochure, call 608-782-5610.





# Affiliation journey

## My Perspective: Affiliates spread the Gospel message

**A**fter more than two years of co-ministering in the FSPA affiliation office, I find there is much to reflect upon in sharing my perspectives on the role and work of our partners in ministry—FSPA affiliates. When interviewing the men and women considering affiliation, I am awed by their sincere and heartfelt levels of commitment. Their love for FSPA is clearly and profoundly expressed in so many ways. Their deeply prayerful spirit is evidenced as they discuss their call to affiliation as a furthering of their baptismal call to live the Gospel and be the face of Christ in our world today.

At the end of his life, St. Francis of Assisi said: “I have done what is mine to do; now you must do the same.” Many affiliates take this message to heart. There are countless stories of our affiliates reaching out to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our affiliates serve and minister to the marginalized and spiritually and materially poor in our society. There are also some who are assisting with the 24/7 practice of perpetual adoration as prayer partners.

Feeding the hungry by providing for the basic needs of another is clearly following the directive of St. Francis and depicting the face of Christ in our world. St. Francis reached out to the lepers in his time and we too are invited to serve the most vulnerable in our society. In La Crosse, Wis., our affiliates are feeding the hungry and serving others at places such as the Warming Center and The Salvation Army. At the Lakeland

Food Pantry in Minocqua, Wis., affiliates serve the needs of the hidden poor in their community. Through donations and direct assistance, affiliates in the Verona, Wis., area are feeding the homeless at various sites. There are numerous other places where our affiliates are finding ways to “do what is theirs to do” in their various ministries.



*The Wisdom Walkers, a companion community in Wisconsin's Northwoods, are making a difference in their corner of the world. Back row from left, Lisa Becker, Sister Marla Lang, Joan Meeder, Ginger Gullan, Mary Ticknor and Addie Halfmann. Front row from left, Sister Pauline Wittry, Jean Lierman, Sisters Karen Kappell and Anita Beskar . Photo courtesy of Lucy Ann Meyer, FSPA*

The affiliates of Las Vegas, Nev., are also committed to making the lives of the marginalized better. Together with Lorraine Forster, FSPA, they work closely with Father John B. McShane in promoting the St. Benedict Homeless Ministry. This mission not only serves sandwiches to the homeless, its volunteers also provide blankets, personal care items and clothing. Affiliate Bernadette Murray enthusiastically spoke about their work with St. Benedict's: “We try to give the homeless what we would want and help them to feel they are worthy. Everyone enjoys an occasional piece of cake. We love them so that they can love themselves.” In ministering to the homeless in Las Vegas, our affiliates are truly living out their commitments and thus following in the footsteps of St. Francis.

Ministering to the sick and dying is

another significant ministry that our affiliates are engaged in around the country. Whether affiliates are serving in their professional roles as parish nurses or hospice chaplains or volunteering their time as a listening presence or to hold the hands of the sick and dying, they are reaching out and “doing what is theirs to do.”

These committed individuals are embracing our FSPA spirit and aiding those who are the most vulnerable. A statement by affiliate Laura Brown from Erie, Ill., attests to her desire to live the FSPA spirit of loving presence: “I provide a listening ear with lots of hugs especially to the elderly and grieving. I know I am sharing the love of Christ in my ministry.”

Affiliate Scott Baeseman, a volunteer police chaplain, finds his ministry rewarding and spiritually enriching. He recently commented: “I believe I bring the presence of God in the dirty stuff—in the chaos of life.

Whether it is a suicide or notification to a family of an accident, I know that God is walking with me.” Scott is indeed living out his affiliate call to minister to the suffering and wounded in our world.

Assisting in the FSPA practice of continuous prayer as adorers is another

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*As co-minister in the FSPA affiliation office, Lucy Ann Meyer, FSPA, journeys with the men and women who commit to living out Franciscan values in their everyday lives. To*

*learn more about FSPA affiliation visit [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org) and select Join Us and Affiliate.*



## Spirit of Ministry: Time in Cameroon deepens affiliate's commitment to FSPA

**A**by Karen Hellman, affiliate  
s a child, I attended St. Francis  
of Assisi elementary school in  
Ellsworth, Wis. I was raised on  
the stories and legends of Francis, and  
he became part of the fiber of my faith  
development early in life. While attend-  
ing Viterbo University in La Crosse,  
Wis., I was able to deepen my love and  
understanding of Francis through my  
associations with Franciscan Sisters of  
Perpetual Adoration  
as professors and by  
participation in the  
university's Francis-  
can Friends program.

After graduation  
in 1993 I took a  
teaching job in cen-  
tral Minnesota, but  
was able to relocate  
back to the area to  
teach at Wiscon-  
sin's Onalaska High  
School in 1996.  
The FSPA spirit is  
what drew me to  
affiliation—I wanted  
a way to make my  
life more meaningful. At the time I was  
considering vowed religious life and  
saw affiliation as a way to deepen the  
discernment process for myself while  
at the same time, to live my faith more  
deeply and intentionally. Affiliation is a  
way for me to publicly proclaim my own  
spirit that aligns with FSPA and provides  
me with a community of women and  
men who share a common vision for  
the world. As an affiliate, I belong to a  
community which strengthens me as I  
live my daily life.



*Karen Hellman greets a family elder in  
Nkambe, Cameroon.*

*Photo courtesy of Karen Hellman*

In keeping with my continual search  
to make my life more meaningful, I  
became a Shared Horizons volunteer  
and had the privilege of living and  
working in Cameroon, Africa, from  
1999 to 2000. I taught English, language  
arts, music and religion to boys rang-  
ing in age from 10 to 21 at St. Aloysius  
Minor Seminary near the tiny village of  
Kitiwum, not far from Kumbo/Shisong.  
My students were boys and young men  
with big dreams for better lives, and  
were working diligently toward better  
futures for themselves, their families  
and their country.

Tribal and familial connections are  
very strong in Cameroon. The people I  
met all seemed to have a genuine care  
and concern for  
one another. Life in  
Cameroon forces  
one to slow down  
and truly be present  
for other people. In  
the U.S., we are all  
rushing to accom-  
plish our objectives  
and cross off items  
from our lists of  
things to do. In Cam-  
eroon, we take our  
time to greet others  
and spend a few  
moments in conver-  
sation. People matter  
more than objectives.

My time in Cameroon was a time of  
service and also a time of personal spiri-  
tual growth and development. Being a  
Shared Horizons volunteer more deeply  
defined what it means for me to be an  
affiliate who made promises of prayer,  
community and ministry; and being  
an affiliate has helped me more deeply  
define what it means to be living in this  
world as a daughter of God and as a  
Franciscan.

Today, I continue to answer the call to  
affiliation as a massage therapist working

at Integrative Therapies of La Crosse.  
Even though the details of my minis-  
tries have changed over the years, what  
remains constant is a deep desire to  
affiliate my life with Franciscanism and  
FSPA. Affiliation continually provides  
me with spiritual direction, connection  
to a powerful community of faith-filled  
women and men and the opportunity to  
live my faith more deeply. ■



*Karen (Matzek)  
Hellman became an  
affiliate in 1998. She  
shares her affiliation  
journey with Laurice  
Heybl, FSPA—her  
contact sister. Karen  
and her husband have  
two young sons.*

### My Perspective

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way that affiliates foster our mission.  
More than 27 affiliates serve as adorers  
at various times of the day or evening in  
the Adoration Chapel at St. Rose Con-  
vent. "It is the most fulfilling hour of my  
week" was a recent quote by prayer part-  
ner and affiliate Doris Doherty.

"You can feel the power of 135 years of  
prayer in the Adoration Chapel and I feel  
so privileged to participate in that experi-  
ence" was another remark by an affiliate  
who also serves as prayer partner.

Affiliate Margaret Cunningham stated:  
"I love being an affiliate, but I feel partic-  
ularly privileged being a prayer partner,  
as prayer—communing with our Lord—is  
the basis of all things."

Yes, there are many ways that our affil-  
iates are choosing to live out their Fran-  
ciscan call and foster our FSPA spirit.  
They are using their gifts and talents in  
the service of others and being the face  
of Christ in our world. ■





# Profession journey

## Three letters, many travels to FSPA

**I**t took three hand-written letters for Linda Mershon, FSPA, to open the gate and find her way to the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.

The letters were written in 1992 during a transitional time for Sister Linda as she was intentionally praying for guidance in her life. She was in the midst of a career in administration, a master's degree curriculum in spirituality and a search for a practicum opportunity. She mailed the letters to FSPA Marie Des Jarlais and Cecilia "Cecy" Corcoran after receiving a brochure, in her own mailbox, for a program they co-directed at that time—Global Awareness Through Experience.

In the first letter she asked them for a chance to come and meet her work-experience requirement within the context of GATE. The reply she received was "No thank you." In her second letter she appealed (with "courage and ... rejection issues," she laughs) to "carry bags, buy groceries and drive the van—whatever you need me to do." Again the response was "No thank you." Then she mailed a third letter. "I can't believe I wrote back one more time," she recalls, asking again to "carry bags, buy groceries and drive the van. I don't need a major role in the program; I just want to complete my practicum and help out."

This continual contact led Sisters Marie and Cecy to finally agree to meet "this persistent person," and so they made plans for her to travel to Mexico. After a week of partaking in the program herself Sister Linda did indeed, for a month, carry bags and buy groceries but also assisted guests and Sisters Marie and Cecy in facilitation. After completing

her assignment she found herself still in Mexico City, in a kitchen doing the supper dishes one evening. "I was washing, Sister Cecy was drying. She asked me, 'So, Linda, what are you going to do with your life?' I replied in shock: 'What do you mean, religious life?' But something inside me asked," she distinctly remembers thinking, "could this be it?"

Sister Linda's three letters turned into many travels to FSPA. That internal stirring sent her into serious discernment.



*During a May 2001 Goddess GATE trip to Vienna, Austria, Sisters Linda Mershon, left, and Cecilia Corcoran invite participants to step through the threshold of time to view the Venus of Willendorf, 26,000 years old.*

Photo courtesy of Linda Mershon, FSPA

She went home to Arizona to think and pray and, in 1994, received her answer to Sister Cecy's question—move to La Crosse, Wis., and live in community with FSPA. "I had a strong sense this was it for me, but formation wasn't necessarily easy. I look back on it now," she says, "with fondness." Her introduction to FSPA corresponded with the inauguration of the common novitiate program: "... nine months in which you can really learn about the choice you've made, discern in a deep way whether this is the right thing for you and get to know

the community. It was a time for quiet prayer, exchange and learning ... an experience for which I'm really grateful," she says. Having completed her apostolic novitiate year at 8th Day Center for Justice in Chicago, Ill., where she discovered a passion for social justice ministry, Sister Linda went on to make her first vows in 1998 and made her way back to ministry in Mexico for the next seven years, working in GATE with Sisters Cecy and Marie.

Then, after serving for a brief time as a hospital chaplain, Sister Linda received word, again discerned and accepted a new ministerial move—she was nominated and elected to FSPA leadership as a mission councilor in 2006. "I have tried to engage in an authentic way with the community and its mission since I first arrived. Perhaps that's why I was elected then," Sister Linda reflects. During that four-year term FSPA heard her "fresh voice" and answered by electing her president in 2010. "I hope that I have the vision and the creativity to merit the position and that my ability to push the edges has moved the community forward a bit during my term. I am willing to do, in the context of community," she says, "what God wants me to do."

Now, FSPA's membership office at St. Rose Convent is receiving letters—many no longer hand written—from women who, like Sister Linda years ago, are intentionally praying for guidance in their lives, perhaps waiting for a "Yes" response to religious life. Her message to them is that "it affords women the freedom to really live and work in a way that serves the Gospel ... while at the same time doing the relational work within community." Life with FSPA will "nourish them," says Sister Linda, "and feed their dreams." ■





# GATE

Encounter people of courage, faith and hope. Learn of their dreams and challenges. Join us for the opportunity to deepen your own solidarity with our southern neighbors.



Guatemala  
July 9-19, 2013



El Salvador  
July 21-28, 2013

## Global Awareness Through Experience

www.GATE-Travel.org ♦ P: 608.791.5283  
E: gate@fspa.org

### FSPA Volunteer Opportunities 2013

#### Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center, Hiawatha, Iowa

From washing laundry, to cutting vegetables and gardening and to praying, there are many ways in which volunteers help this center grow. Some volunteers choose to serve once a month or once a week, while others give a little time each day while here on retreat. If you would like to join our group of volunteers please contact Sister of St. Francis Marj English at 319-395-6700, ext. 216 or [menglish@prairiewoods.org](mailto:menglish@prairiewoods.org).

#### Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, Wis.

Spend time on beautiful Trout Lake volunteering for one of two summer retreats: May 27-31 or June 16-20, 2013. Volunteers will grocery shop, prepare, cook and serve meals. Free lodging and meals provided. For information, contact Dominican Sister Elizabeth Amman at 715-385-3750 or [marywood.center@gmail.com](mailto:marywood.center@gmail.com).

#### Franciscan Spirituality Center, La Crosse, Wis.

This center welcomes volunteers willing to support the center. Opportunities are available at the reception desk and in the social room, providing hospitality for guests.

Volunteer hours are flexible, from once per month to several shifts per month. Training is provided and volunteers receive 20 percent off the cost of programs. For information contact Linda Kerrigan at 608-791-5276 or [lkerrigan@fspa.org](mailto:lkerrigan@fspa.org).

#### Christine Center, Willard, Wis.

Volunteers are always welcome and needed at the Christine Center, a Wisconsin spirituality center staffed by FSPA. The tasks ready for helpers vary with the season but volunteers are needed in the kitchen, on the grounds or assisting with house-keeping. We welcome volunteers for a few hours or a few days. For more information contact Wheaton Franciscan Sister Marge Zulaski, 715-267-7507 or [mzulaski@tds.net](mailto:mzulaski@tds.net).





# In Memoriam

## Rejoice, you who are alive in Christ

### **Sister Margaret (Carlotta) Hassel** **April 18, 1915-Sept. 11, 2012**

Sister Margaret was born in Ashland, Wis.

She spent 50 years teaching in parochial schools in Iowa and Wisconsin including seven years at St. Joseph's, Carroll, Iowa, and 18 years at Cathedral School, Superior, Wis. Sister Margaret then served as secretary and tutor at Cathedral School. From 1989 to 1997 she cared for her mother and brother.

She retired to Villa St. Joseph in 1997.



She taught in parochial schools in Iowa and Wisconsin for 34 years. Sister Mercita ministered as principal at St. Mary's School, La Crosse, Wis., for nine

years and at St. Anthony's, Loyal, Wis., for five years. She then served as Director of Religious Education at Loyal, Wis., and Watertown, Ramona and Madison, S.D. From 1990 to 1996 she lived in Las Vegas, Nev., where she worked with Catholic Charities' Senior Nutrition Program. In 1994, a former student, James Hartman, funded the "Sister Mercita Weis Senior Center" for the homeless and hungry in Las Vegas. After moving to La Crosse, Sister Mercita continued her volunteer work with the elderly at St. Joseph Cathedral.

She retired to St. Rose Convent in 2002 and moved to Villa St. Joseph in March 2012.



### **Sister Dorothy (Emelyn) Falkner** **July 24, 1936-Oct. 1, 2012**

Sister Dorothy was born in Lima, Wis.

She ministered as a primary school teacher for over 30 years in Wisconsin and Iowa. In 1989, Sister Dorothy moved to St. Anthony Retreat Center in Marathon, Wis., where she served as director of housekeeping. From 1996 to 2004 Sister Dorothy was coordinator of auxiliary services at Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center in Arbor Vitae, Wis.

She retired to St. Rose Convent in 2010.



### **Sister Karen (Ronald Ann) Hophan** **April 27, 1946-Nov. 22, 2012**

Sister Karen was born in Plum City, Wis.

She began her ministry as a teacher in parochial schools in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Sister Karen then became an occupational therapist and worked in the Twin Cities before relocating to Chippewa Falls, Wis., where she served in day care and child care ministry.



La Crosse, Wis., and was named Helen Marie.

Sister Rose Frances served as a teacher and/or principal for 52 years in parochial schools in Guam, Iowa, Washington and Wisconsin, including 14 years at St. Patrick's, Onalaska, Wis. She ministered as assistant administrator at St. Michael's Home, La Crosse, Wis., for a year and then as tutor, substitute teacher and parish visitor at St. Mary's, Auburndale, Wis.

Sister Rose Frances retired to St. Rose Convent in 1989 and was coordinator of chapel tours until 1997. She made Villa St. Joseph her home in 2007.



### **Sister Bernadette (Joselind) Hahn** **July 13, 1923-Jan. 29, 2013**

Sister Bernadette was born on a farm near Liberty, Wis.

She served as a registered nurse for 42 years in hospitals in Idaho and Wisconsin, including 14 years at St. Francis Hospital in La Crosse, Wis. Sister Bernadette served as the administrator at Lost River's Hospital in Arco, Idaho, and at Villa St. Joseph from 1975 to 1977. She then ministered as a nurse at the Villa and at a nursing home in Edgerton, Wis. From 1987 to 1994 Sister Bernadette served as St. Rose Convent's Health Center Coordinator.

She retired at St. Rose in 2004 and made the Villa her home in 2007.



### **Sister Mercita Weis** **Jan. 3, 1922-Nov. 15, 2012**

Sister Mercita was born in Rozellville, Wis., and was named Lucille.

### **Sister Rose Frances Phalin** **Aug. 13, 1914-Jan. 14, 2013**

Sister Rose Frances was born in

### **Sister Emma (Gerosa) Kriz** **May 15, 1932-Feb. 21, 2013**

Sister Emma was born on a farm near



Brainard, Neb.

She served as a teacher and school principal for almost 50 years. Her first 30 years of teaching were in Wisconsin and Iowa. In 1983 she went to David, Ky., as a teacher. Sister Emma became principal of David School in 1987; she served in that position and as teacher until she moved to La Crosse, Wis., in 2005. She returned to David School a year later and then retired to St. Rose Convent in 2008.



volunteer for many organizations, was one of the first nurses involved in hospice care and was a FSPA affiliate. Mary Ann was very proud of her family; her grandchildren and great-grandchildren gave her the most joy. She was preceded in death by her husband, a daughter, a son, a grandson and granddaughter. Mary Ann is survived by six children, 19 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.



### Stay connected: sign up for our email newsletter

Would you like to receive *Perspectives* news more often? If yes, sign up for *Perspectives Update* and you'll receive FSPA news emailed to you. Visit [www.fspa.org](http://www.fspa.org) to register your email address.

### Share socially: what we're hearing from our online followers

A Facebook friend writes: "I cannot look back but with fondness on all my influential teachers over the years. Sister Ruth Marie gave more love than exists today. Sister Julia Anne taught me how to behave. Sister Mary Eve (1978) taught me extreme kindness. Sister Clarice taught me all about the world. Sister Judine taught me how to type, which I am presently doing. Sister Geneva taught me correct English ... And oh, how I miss you Sister Lucille; I had to come talk to you every day because you made me laugh so much." — Jon  
[www.facebook.com/franciscansisters](http://www.facebook.com/franciscansisters)

A YouTube viewer comments: "Thank you Sister Julia. Was great listening to your story and seeing you in action at your ministry. Beautiful video." — Sister Alison  
[www.youtube.com/franciscansisters](http://www.youtube.com/franciscansisters)

Mapping the Mystery blog follower, Denise, writes: "Thank you. What you write has meant a lot in the past weeks as I cope with a huge change in my life. I hope I will have the courage and faith to 'let go!'"

Messy Jesus Business follower posts this to Sister Julia's Iowa service trip blog reflection: "I often think about how we use urban settings as a place for people to have a vastly different 'eye opening' experience, so I am thrilled to see it working in reverse as well. What an amazing group of young men to just jump into life in Northeast Iowa, which had to be a little overwhelming and intimidating at first. Thanks for sharing your story." — Janelle

Follow FSPA blogs at <http://www.fspa.org/news/blogs.html> ■

## Affiliates

### Carole Hodgins

Feb. 4, 1937-Oct. 9, 2102

Carole was born in Winona, Minn. She married Walter Hodgins in February 1965. They moved to Washington, D.C., in 1967, then to Red Wing, Minn., in 1989.



She was a member of the Church of St. Joseph where she served as eucharistic minister. Carole was a FSPA affiliate and a member of the Befrienders Club. She enjoyed visiting and travelling. Survivors include her husband and one son.

### Mary Theresa Postlethwaite Dec. 21, 1931-March 8, 2013

Mary was born and raised in Kansas City, Kan. She married Rolland Henry Postlethwaite in 1951. She was a cosmetologist, an active member of the Inland and Bar Cosmetology Association and a proud member of the Washington Hair Fashion Committee. Mary and her son owned two salons.



She was preceded in death by her husband and a son. Mary is survived by six sons, 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.

### Mary Ann Lipska

March 8, 1920-Jan. 29, 2013

Mary Ann was born at Castle Rock Ridge in Grant County, Wis. She was a registered nurse who served as a lieutenant in WWII. Mary Ann and her husband Melvin raised their children on the family farm. She served as a

FSPA website

Read the complete obituaries at

[www.fspa.org/news](http://www.fspa.org/news)





# Addenda

## The Salvation Army honors FSPA with Red Shield Award

The Community Red Shield Award is given each year to someone who has contributed to the community in a significant way. On April 25, for the first time, The Salvation Army of La Crosse, Wis., presented the award to an organization—the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration.



The Salvation Army representatives recognized the sisters' good works in the La Crosse community and offered praise for Georgia Christensen, FSPA, who serves as advisory board vice president. They also thanked the sisters for their commitment to the shelter, serving dinner and offering the meat for a meal once a month.

Finally, they acknowledged the sisters' upcoming anniversary, celebrating 135 years of perpetual adoration on Aug. 1. "Anywhere you live in the world, you too have been impacted by FSPA. The sisters have held the city of La Crosse and the needs of the world in perpetual prayer for 135 years."

## Iverson Freking award presented to sister for her dedicated service



*Kathy Stuttgen, FSPA*

The prestigious Iverson Freking Recognition Award has recognized faith-filled people of action in the La Crosse, Wis., region since 1987. The award is based on an individual's spiritual example, respect for the faith of others, participation in a spiritual congregation and commitment to community. In 2013, Kathy Stuttgen, FSPA, accepted the award for her dedication to area senior citizens—most notably for her health care advocacy and volunteer work at St. Clare Health Mission.

Sister Kathy and co-honorees, Audrey Kader and Rev. Kent Johnson, accepted their awards at a luncheon held in January.

## Sisters offer prayer during the papal election

At the announcement of Pope Benedict's resignation, the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration added prayer intentions in the congregation's Adoration Chapel for the pope and for the College of Cardinals. In an interview with ABC affiliate,

WXOW Linda Mershon, FSPA, expressed her hopes for the new pope as "someone who values and guards the tradition of our church while at the same time, being open to the signs of the times and also willing to dialogue about change."

At Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, Wis., sisters and staff led a daily prayer vigil during the conclave. They used a variety of prayer practices as well as silent prayer.

Immediately following the election the sisters turned their prayer intention toward Pope Francis as he begins to lead the Catholic Church in this critical time. "We welcome Pope Francis' spiritual leadership and look forward to working with him in carrying forward the Gospel message."



*Sisters and friends gather at Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center to pray during the papal election.*

## Leadership Conference for Women Religious accepts the Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice

The Paulist Center of Boston, Mass., presented the 2013 Isaac Hecker Award for Social Justice to the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, of which FSPA is a member. LCWR President and Sister of St. Francis of Assisi Florence Deacon accepted the award on Jan. 26, 2013.

The award recognizes the sisters' commitment to justice and caring for human needs, honoring LCWR congregations for their social justice work over many years. This includes their efforts to abolish human trafficking, to protect the environment and treat the earth responsibly, to secure universal access to health care, to develop stockholder resolutions to promote just corporate actions and for bringing the issue of immigration to the forefront as an important social justice issue.

According to the announcement from The Paulist Center, "Women religious of the United States have taught us to pray, educated us on how to live and work in our ever-changing world, nursed our sick and old, cared for our abandoned, reached out to all the marginalized, and taught us how to respect the dignity of all. They have, in sum, shown us how Jesus might live in our world today. Like Isaac Hecker, they have worked tirelessly to foster the growth and development



of American Catholicism, showing us what a socially just society would look like.”

### **YWCA recognizes La Crosse-area’s outstanding women**

The annual Tribute to Outstanding Women awards are presented annually by the YWCA to honor women who have made important contributions to the Greater La Crosse, Wis., community. Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA, was honored during the 2012 tribute. She was recognized for her numerous contributions to area organizations including Catholic Charities for the Diocese of La Crosse (chair), Viterbo University Board of Trustees (chair from 2004 to 2012), Catholic Residential Services for the Diocese of La Crosse, La Crosse Symphony, La Crosse Performing Arts Center, Downtown Rotary and La Crosse County Historical Society.



*Mary Ann Gschwind, FSPA*

### **Wisconsin Catholic sisters share prayer, conversation with bishops**

Last fall, Catholic sisters, including Eileen Lang, FSPA, and bishops from Wisconsin joined together to discuss the congregational and pastoral needs of the church in Wisconsin and how they can work together to meet those needs by fostering deeper dialogue. “We noted how important this message of collaboration is needed during this Year of Faith and the anniversary of Vatican II,” says Sister Eileen. John Huebscher, executive director of Wisconsin Catholic Conference, facilitated the day. Each diocese will work together to move the ideas forward.



*Collaboration during the Year of Faith brings Wisconsin bishops and Catholic sisters together to foster deeper dialogue. Seated second and third from right are Bishop William Callahan, La Crosse Diocese, and Eileen Lang, FSPA. Photo courtesy of Linda Szocik, SSJ-TOSF*

### **FSPA-sponsored institution takes the Franciscan Pledge**

Viterbo University in La Crosse, Wis., has endorsed the Franciscan Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor. “I’m grateful to members of the Environmental Responsibility Committee and others who planned activities for Campus Sustainability Day,” said President Rick Artman during an event held to celebrate the pledge signing. “Our Franciscan tradition teaches that all of creation is a gift from the Creator, and thus we are obliged to be responsible stewards of the gifts in our trust. The FSPA have been outstanding stewardship role models for us and our community.”



*Viterbo University President Rick Artman, pictured with Raintry Salk, endorses the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor at the Dancing Francis sculpture located in Assisi Courtyard.*

### **Mayo Clinic Health System–Franciscan Healthcare collaborates on sustainability project**

FSPA-sponsored Mayo Clinic Health System–Franciscan Healthcare, Hillview Urban Agriculture Center and Western Technical College recently announced their agreement to collaborate on a mission to create sustainable communities in La Crosse, Wis.

The group’s efforts are focused on a variety of elements from preserving the environment, teaching healthy lifestyle changes (including the promotion of local food, healthy eating and sustainable practices through the new venture called Sustainability Institute), to offering social and economic opportunities. They plan to encompass those efforts into a vision that could become a model throughout the nation. “This collaborative effort also honors our Franciscan roots,” comments Joe Kruse, vice president, Mayo Clinic Health System-Franciscan Healthcare. “The Franciscan Sisters’ skilled care facility on St. Joseph’s Ridge originally served as a farm that provided food for St. Francis Hospital patients. We feel this collaboration will offer everything a health care provider wants for patients.” ■





**Franciscan Sisters**  
of Perpetual Adoration

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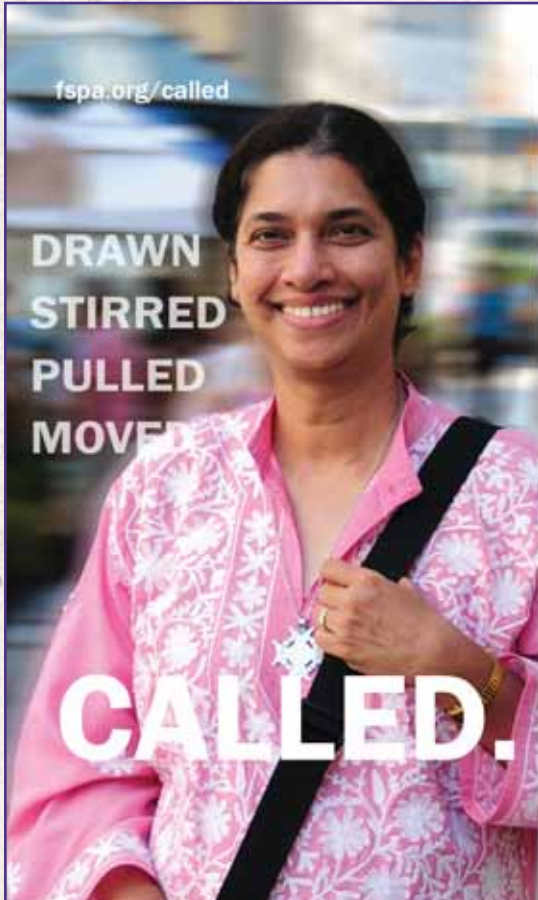
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[fspa.org/called](http://fspa.org/called)

**"Somewhere, deep down inside, there was a peace."**

*Sister Corrina*

**Discernment Events**

*Marywood's Got Sisters: May 31 - June 1, 2013*

Women 18 to 40 are invited to come to Marywood Franciscan Spirituality Center, Arbor Vitae, Wis., to hear the vocation stories of the sisters on staff. Share your experiences, ask questions and enjoy good food, prayer and beautiful Trout Lake. For more information call 715-385-3750 or send an email to [marywood.center@gmail.com](mailto:marywood.center@gmail.com). Reservations accepted through May 24, 2013.

*Come and See: July 31 - Aug. 2, 2013*

Our Come and See program at St. Rose Convent, La Crosse, Wis., is designed for women, ages 19 to 50, to consider the call to live a Franciscan lifestyle. Through prayer and reflection participants become better acquainted with FSPA and Franciscanism in the 21st century. For more information call 888-683-3772 or send an email to [membership@fspa.org](mailto:membership@fspa.org).

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